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MANUAL OF THE
ARCH-CONFRATERNITY
OF THE
CORD OF S.FRANCIS.



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MANUAL
OF THE
ARCH-CONFRATERNITY
OF THE
CORD OF S. FRANCIS.

COMPILED BY THE
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Jussu Revdi Adm. P. Ministri Provincialis examinavi libellum,
Manual of the Arch-Confraternity of the Cord, &c., et nihil inveni
quod fidei Catholicae aut Ecclesiae Romanae Constitutionibus non
consonat, ideoque illum typis publicari posse judico.

F. ANSELMUS KNAPEN, O.S.F.,
Ex Secret. Genlis et S.C. de Propaganda Consultor.

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Placet Imprimatur.

F. BERNARDUS VAN LOO,
Mnr. Prov.

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NOTICE.

THE plan of this little work was suggested by an "Essay on the Cord of the Seraphical Father St. Francis," composed by Father Pacificus Baker, of the Order of St. Francis, and published in London in 1792. A considerable portion of that short Essay has been embodied in the present work, and is distinguished by being placed between inverted commas. We have thought it better to give it in Father Baker's own words, so quaint, so full of unction and solid piety, and bearing the impress of a heart inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ, and animated with the spirit of St. Francis.

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MANUAL

OF THE

ARCH-CONFRATERNITY OF THE CORD OF ST. FRANCIS.

CHAPTER I.

ON CONFRATERNITIES IN GENERAL.

A CONFRATERNITY is an association of pious persons desirous of advancing daily in virtue by the practice of some particular devotion, and who for that end unite together that they may assist one another by the performance of certain good works, or by prayers and other spiritual exercises.

A confraternity is, as its name indicates, a brotherhood—that is, a society whose members become brethren, and constitute a sort of family submitted to one head, having identical aims and interests, and between whom a certain family likeness exists. This likeness consists in some exterior mark or sign common to all, and by which they can be recognised as belonging to the association—*e.g.*, by a certain form of dress, by the observance of certain rules, or the practice of certain spiritual exercises ; just as the members of a family are recognised by a similarity

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of complexion, features, voice, or manners. The effect, therefore, of a confraternity is to unite together and form into one body, persons differing widely from each other in character, rank, age, or condition; and it does this by establishing a certain resemblance between them, and by giving them a common aim and common interests.

I.

Men form associations, because, in the first place, God made man not to be alone, but to live in union with other men; and secondly, because reason teaches man that his life will be more useful and pleasant and more advantageous if spent in the company of his fellows.

(a.) In effect, man is conscious of his own weakness, of his incapacity to accomplish alone by his own powers the vast projects which his heart conceives. He feels that he must seek outside of himself the force necessary to execute his designs,—that he must multiply his strength by borrowing that of others, and thus overcome the difficulties which stand in his way, and prevent the attainment of the end he has in view. This he does by association; which confers such great power even on the feeblest things. What, for example, is more feeble, more incapable of resistance, than a drop of water? It yields to the lightest pressure, and is impelled hither and thither by the simple force of gravitation. But when these drops, so powerless if isolated, are joined together and form an ocean, the most solid embankments yield to their impetuous attacks, massive structures are sapped in their foundations, great rocks are carried to and fro; and if the granite cliffs subjected to their action maintain their ground, it is not without retaining indelible marks of the

severity of the contest and the mighty power of the vanquished waves. So great a force does association confer on the weakest elements.

(b.) But association is also calculated to satisfy man's cravings for happiness. God created him to His own likeness, and impressed in his soul the image of the Blessed Trinity, of that ineffable society in which three Divine Persons really distinct subsist in the most perfect unity that can be conceived, since they are one and the same Divine nature. It is in this society, in this unity in diversity, that God finds His unbounded felicity and absolute perfection. Now that which constitutes the happiness and perfection of God, constitutes the happiness and perfection of man, for man is made by God to His own image and likeness; and thus it was that God from the beginning formed him for society: "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. ii. 18), knowing that it was the means by which he could best attain the degree of perfection, and consequently of happiness, for which he was naturally destined. When, therefore, he finds his felicity in isolation from his fellow-men, it is only by exception, and through an extraordinary and supernatural grace.

II.

But it is in the supernatural order which is engrafted upon nature, and receives from it a certain form and colouring that the advantages of association are most clearly manifested.

God makes use of means congenial to nature to lead man to supernatural perfection and felicity; and on this account He has established the great law of fraternal charity which unites together persons of every state and condition, and disposes them for that union with their Divine Head, God Himself,

by which they are raised to the highest degree of perfection and felicity of which they are capable. Hence the establishment of the Church, that great society whose members are so closely united together and to their Head, Jesus Christ, by the profession of the same faith and the observance of the same laws, under the guidance of His Vicar. Hence the establishment of religious orders whose members join together to assist each other in the practice of the evangelical counsels, and which, as Balmez remarks, are as congenial to Christianity, and as necessary a product of the spirit of charity which animates the Church, as are the flowers and fruits which come forth on a healthy tree, or the band of verdant grass which marks the course of a limpid stream. Hence also the establishment of religious confraternities, which accomplish in the midst of the world what religious orders do in the cloister; which satisfy the longings for perfection inseparable from real piety, and, while leaving men in the bosom of their families, free to fulfil all the duties of their social position, enable them to enjoy some of the advantages of the religious state:—the community of prayers and good works; the benefits of good example and counsel; the practice of mutual charity, and the guidance of a director or superior, which is at the same time the most essential condition and the most precious advantage of the religious life. It is not therefore surprising that those who earnestly seek to practise virtue and advance in perfection should be eager to form part of some pious confraternity, and in fact experience proves that wherever confraternities are established, they generally count among their members the most devout and zealous persons in the parish.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of these pious associations, particularly in the cen-

tury in which we live. Error and vice possess at the present time one of the most powerful organisations ever seen ; and, under the specious pretexts of freedom of thought and necessary recreation, endeavour to excite a revolt of the intellect by the rejection of dogmatic truth, and a revolt of the will by drawing men into the vortex of pleasure, towards which so many of every age and condition are madly hurrying, and which either includes or infallibly leads to the neglect or rejection of the moral law and of the obligations it imposes. We must therefore strive that the most powerful weapons may not remain exclusively in the hands of the enemies of God and His Church ; we must oppose camp to camp, organisation to organisation, society to society ; and uniting all faithful hearts in one serried phalanx around the banner of truth and virtue, defend it against the attacks of the world, the seductions of the flesh, and the wiles of the devil.

III.

But these pious associations, while opposing a barrier to the floods of unbelief and vice which threaten to sweep away the landmarks of society, are most conducive to individual sanctification.

The mutual intercourse of pious people promotes the diffusion of religious knowledge : they communicate to each other their little store of information on Christian doctrine and the spiritual life ; they share with one another their pious gleanings in books, sermons, conversations, or in prayer,—thus supplying their mutual deficiencies ;—they behold more clearly the deformity of vice, and strive earnestly to fly it ; and attracted by the beauty of virtue, they put forth all their energies to acquire and practise it.

Besides this, the inclination to imitate what we behold is so strong, the power of example so great, that the members of a confraternity practise virtue more boldly and more perseveringly than those who are left to struggle single-handed against the tide which sets towards the rocks and shoals of perdition. It requires so much courage to bear up against popular prejudice, and to hold and reduce to practice principles which are either openly or tacitly condemned by the world ; it is so hard to tread with perseverance the narrow path which leads to eternal life, and not to become weary and sit down despondently by the wayside. But when we form a compact band, marching under one banner, and see our associates advocate the same opinions and practise the same virtues, when we behold their steady progress in the love and service of God, our courage is aroused, our energies seem to be multiplied, and if we cannot always banish a feeling of weariness, we are at least able to prosecute, in company with others, a journey which we would never have accomplished alone ; just as the soldier who remains in the ranks and keeps step hardly feels the fatigues of the march, whereas, did he leave the ranks and fall behind, he would soon sit down hopelessly by the roadside, and become an easy prey to the enemy. " It is better, therefore," says Holy Scripture, " that two should be together than one, for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall, he shall be supported by the other : woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth, he hath none to lift him up " (Eccles. iv. 9, 10). And in the day of battle, in the time of temptation and trial, he will combat more bravely and successfully who is surrounded by valiant soldiers : " A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city " (Prov. xviii. 19).

Lastly, the community of prayer is one of the

most precious advantages of these pious associations. Our Lord seems desirous to allure us in every possible way to union with our fellow-men, and, therefore, makes promises to those who pray in the society of others, which appear out of all proportion with those made to the prayer of individuals, for he seems to attribute to the former a sort of omnipotence. We know, indeed, that "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, . . . and He will hear their prayer and save them" (Ps. cxliv.), that "every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 8);—but when our Lord speaks of prayer made in the company of others, He promises to stand in our midst and plead with us, thus giving to our petitions a force which His Heavenly Father's Heart cannot resist: "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning *anything whatsoever they shall ask*, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, *there am I in the midst of them*" (Matt. xviii. 19, 20). The presence of Jesus and the union with our brethren add weight to our requests, and many things which we might perhaps ask in vain if we asked them alone, will be easily obtained when we solicit them as members of some pious confraternity.

The advantages of these religious sodalities may be thus briefly recapitulated: (1.) They supply for the defects inherent to man's nature, satisfy the longings of his heart, and lead him towards perfection; (2.) they sustain the cause of religion and virtue in the midst of the world; and (3.) contribute powerfully to individual sanctification.*

* Cf. St. Alphonsus: *Glories of Mary*. Ramière: *The Apostleship of Prayer*.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARCH-CONFRATERNITY OF THE CORD OF ST.
FRANCIS : ITS ORIGIN AND OBJECT.

WE read in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that "God wrought by the hand of Paul more than common miracles, so that even there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them." These sentiments of respect for objects which had touched the body of a holy man, and of confidence that God would, through the merits of His servant, deliver from ills of soul and body those who wore them with faith and devotion, were not confined to the faithful of the time of St. Paul, but were perpetuated in every age of the Church, and confirmed by prodigies done by their means. It is to the existence of these sentiments that the origin of the Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis seems due. Wadding relates that St. Dominic, after many entreaties, obtained from our Holy Father St. Francis the rough cord with which he had girt himself, and wore it constantly with great devotion until the hour of his death. When we recollect how great was his esteem for St. Francis, and how ardent his desire that the two orders of Friars Preachers and Friars Minor should have but one heart and one soul, we can easily believe that St. Dominic did this not only to show his devotion to St. Francis, and his confidence that he would obtain many favours from God through the merits of His servant, but also that it might be a mark and a symbol of that brotherly affection which he desired ever to exist between those two Orders.

St. Dominic soon found many imitators, and the practice of wearing a cord which had belonged to a member of the Franciscan Order, or was made in imitation of those which the Friars Minor wear, quickly spread throughout Europe, and men delighted to testify in that manner their attachment to the Seraphic Order, and their confidence of obtaining, through the merits and prayers of St. Francis, a particular right to the Divine protection, and a larger share in God's favours. Besides, it was a sort of *via media* between the religious state and the world, and in an age when all Europe appeared eager to be enrolled in one of the great Orders which then flourished, and apparently threatened to transform the world into a cloister, it was eagerly assumed by those admirers of St. Francis who, precluded by their duties or by weak health from embracing the rule or practising the austerities of one of his three Orders, yet longed ardently to find some bond of union with him whose poverty and burning love of God had ravished their hearts, some title by which to call him Father.

It was not, however, until the sixteenth century that the practice of wearing the Franciscan cord received the formal sanction of the Holy See by the erection of the Arch-confraternity. Sixtus V., himself a Franciscan, by his Constitutions "*Ex supernæ dispositionis*" of November 19th, 1585, and "*Divinæ Charitatis*" of August 29th, 1587, instituted this Confraternity in honour of Christ's Passion, and enriched it with many spiritual favours and privileges. Nor was it without reason that a Confraternity, which was an offspring of the devotion to St. Francis, should have for its principal object to honour the sufferings of our Lord; because it was the special mission of St. Francis to inflame the hearts of men with the love of Jesus, by reproducing in the most vivid manner in his whole life all

that was most painful and humiliating in our Lord's career: His rejection by men, His poverty, His austerities, His Passion and Crucifixion,—all were reflected in St. Francis. It was particularly on this account that he received the sacred Stigmata, as Holy Church reminds us in the prayer for the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who when the world was growing cold, didst renew the stigmata of Thy Passion in the flesh of St. Francis, that thus Thou mightest inflame our hearts with the fire of Thy love," &c. It was by placing before the eyes of men a living copy of our suffering Redeemer that God wished to recall to their minds the great price at which their souls had been purchased, and excite them to love tenderly Him who had given them such wonderful proofs of His love. He therefore made St. Francis a living representation of Christ crucified, a living crucifix; and as it is impossible to cast our eyes upon the crucifix without being reminded of the sufferings and love of Jesus, so we cannot have a devotion to St. Francis without being urged to honour the Passion of our Lord, which was, so to say, acted over again in his life, and renewed in his hands and feet and side.

"This Confraternity is, therefore," as Father Baker says, "a pious association in honour of the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, daily to put us in mind of the infinite love of our dear Redeemer to us, and how much we ought to love Him; and as an effect of this love frequently to meditate upon and think of His Passion, with a sincere and devout desire to suffer something for Him, by doing penance for our sins, the cause of His bitter sufferings and cruel death. The Passion of Jesus Christ ought always to be the subject of a Christian's thoughts; to forget or neglect this is to

show ourselves as unworthy as we are insensible of His love. Frequently to think of our Saviour's sufferings and dying on a cross will be the best remedy against the evil of sin, the best preservation against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. To meditate devoutly on the Passion of Jesus Christ will inflame our hearts with Divine love, will make us pleasing to Him, and entitle us to share in the sacred merits of His death, to the pardon of our sins, to an increase in grace and virtue in this world, and to our eternal happiness in the next."

The Confraternity has counted among its members many holy and illustrious men, but especially the Blessed Joseph Labre, a Frenchman, who died full of merits on the 16th of April 1783, and was beatified by his Holiness Pius IX., 20th May 1860.

CHAPTER III.

SIGNIFICATION OF THE CORD.

WE give this explanation in the words of Father Baker:—

"As the design of this Confraternity is to refresh the minds of devout Christians with a daily remembrance of the Passion of their dear Redeemer, that they may more effectually do this, the members of it wear a cord, wherein are made five knots in honour and remembrance of the five wounds of our blessed Saviour. This cord must first be blessed by a Superior of the Order of St. Francis, or some other priest to whom power is given to admit persons into the Confraternity, who, putting it about the waist of the person admitted, gives it to him as a symbol of penance, and chastity, and a perpetual memorial

of Christ's Passion ; that with St. Paul we may learn to glory in the Cross of Christ. It is a symbol of penance, to put us in mind that as sinners we ought daily to do penance for our sins, and to offer up to God, especially in the holy Mass, the infinite merits of Christ's sufferings in satisfaction for our sins. The life of a Christian ought to be a life of penance, as the holy Council of Trent observes. Penance is absolutely necessary for us, sinners as we are. Truth itself has said, '*Unless you do penance, you shall all perish*' (Luke xiii.) The cord is also a symbol of chastity, to inform us that as Christians we are consecrated temples of the Holy Ghost by baptism, children of God, and heirs of heaven, into which no unclean thing shall enter. Our great care then must be to preserve our bodies and souls chaste and undefiled, free from the least impurity either by thought, word, or deed. The cord is further a symbol or perpetual memorial of Christ's Passion, and of those rough cords with which He was cruelly bound by the Jews, tied to a pillar, and dragged to His Crucifixion."

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES OF THIS CONFRATERNITY.

"THE end and design of all pious associations or societies being the spiritual advantage of the members, those who associate together endeavour to increase in grace by the practice of good works here and obtain eternal glory hereafter. These spiritual advantages may be largely obtained by devout Christians in this Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis ; for as it is instituted chiefly in honour of the Passion of Jesus Christ, the source from whence

all spiritual graces flow, it is not to be doubted but that Christians who therein daily honour the Passion of Christ by a daily memorial of His sufferings will receive from Him those graces and favours they humbly ask."

"The members of this Confraternity do, as before is observed, share in and are mutual partakers of each others' good works. They also share in and are partakers of all the prayers, fasts, and good works of all the religious of the three Orders of St. Francis—that is to say, of the first Order, or Franciscan Friars; of the second Order, which is that of the Poor Clares; and of the religious men and women of the third Order, called the Penitents; because they become members of the same body, of the great Franciscan family, and, as such, share in the spiritual treasures of that family, in its good works, merits, and privileges."

CHAPTER V.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.

First, To receive the cord from one of the Superiors of the Franciscan Order, that is, from the Minister-General, Provincial, Guardian, or President of a Franciscan Monastery, or from some priest, secular or regular, to whom the faculty of enrolling in the Confraternity has been delegated.

Second, To wear this holy cord habitually girt around the body, either under or over the inner garments, and not to lay it aside without necessity or for a notable time. But should any one neglect to wear it, he does not cease to belong to the Confraternity, but only forfeits during that time the right to gain the indulgences granted to the members. It

suffices that the *first* cord be blessed ; it can be renewed afterwards without any formality or benediction.

Third, To be inscribed on the register of the Confraternity in some place where it is canonically erected. This formality is not, however, absolutely required, and, if omitted, does not render the reception invalid.

Besides these conditions of membership, it is the *custom* for the members to recite daily five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory be to the Father, in honour of the Five Wounds of our Lord and St. Francis, adding one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, for the intentions of the Pope, and in order to gain the indulgences granted to the members for the recitation of these prayers (see page 22) ; and this custom is admirably calculated to maintain and increase in the heart the spirit of the Confraternity—namely, the devotion to the Passion of our Lord and the imitation of St. Francis. They should also endeavour to honour their holy Father, whose cord they wear ; to invoke him frequently, and imitate his virtues.

In the seventh chapter will be found the rules for those members who constitute a society under a director, having its officers, monthly assemblies, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

ON INDULGENCES.

I. *On Indulgences in General*.—"By an indulgence is understood a remission or releasing of temporal punishment due to the Divine justice, after the guilt of sin has been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance. That there may be temporary punishments to be

undergone by a sinner, even after the sin is forgiven, evidently appears from the case of David and the prophet Nathan in the Book of Kings. These temporary punishments are to be undergone, and by them satisfaction to be made to the Divine justice, either in this world, by penitential works and exercises, or by suffering in Purgatory in the next world. The infinite merits of Christ's sufferings, and the merits of the Blessed Virgin and all the Saints, are humbly offered up to God in satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to our sins after the guilt has been forgiven. The granting these indulgences belongs to the supreme head and chief pastor of the Church, and flows from that power our blessed Saviour gave to St. Peter, when He said to him, 'To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' From these words of our Saviour may be justly concluded, that the Head of the Church, the successor of St. Peter, has the power to grant indulgences, and that the very instant we are absolved on earth, by virtue of the said authority, from sin and punishment, the same moment we are absolved from both in heaven, upon the conditions and due dispositions mentioned, and not only from certain canonical penances for many ages neither in force nor in use. The usefulness of these indulgences will evidently appear when we consider the ends for which they are granted and the conditions required to obtain them. The first and primary end is the honour and glory of God, in some pious, charitable, and meritorious acts, for the spiritual good of the souls of those who perform them. To draw likewise more sweetly and efficaciously sinners to repentance, by all the charitable and tender offers of mercy and pardon, thus made to them by the

Church in God's name, and by His authority : here is no leave granted to sin, no pardon for sins to come ; no selling pardon for money ; no license to do what we will, as the enemies of the Catholic Church falsely assert. No, the Church, the immaculate spouse of Christ, directed by the unerring Spirit of Truth, in all these indulgences aims at nothing but the glory of God and the spiritual good of her children, and to encourage sinners to repentance and amendment of life, without which in vain any one flatters himself that he shall gain or profit by them. This will appear clear and incontestable when the conditions are considered which are required to gain an indulgence, on the due performance of which all the benefit of indulgences depends, and if not duly and rightly observed, no indulgence is or can be gained." An indulgence, therefore, does not remit sin, however light it may be, nor the *eternal* punishment due to mortal sin, but only the *temporal* punishment which has to be undergone *after* sin has been remitted.

Indulgences are either *plenary* or *partial*.

A *plenary* indulgence remits *all* the temporal punishment due at that time to the justice of Almighty God by the person who gains it.

A *partial* indulgence is the remission of a part of that temporal punishment. Thus it may be one of forty or one hundred days, or of seven years or seven quarantines, &c. By a quarantine is meant a period of forty days or the duration of one Lent.

But it must not be imagined that these partial indulgences of one hundred days, seven years, &c., liberate from one hundred days, seven years, &c., of torment in Purgatory. The intention of the Church is to free from as much of the temporal punishment due to sin as would be remitted by Almighty God in consideration of forty days, seven

years, &c., penance performed according to the ancient canons or penitential laws of the Church.

The general conditions for gaining an indulgence are: first, *the state of grace*. Indulgences are favours granted to God's friends, and consequently not accorded to those who wilfully remain His enemies, who refuse to be reconciled with Him. Besides, before the temporal punishment due to a sin can be remitted, the sin itself must have been pardoned. Hence we cannot gain an indulgence unless we be the friends of Almighty God.

It suffices, however, according to theologians, that the *last* of the works prescribed be performed in the state of grace, unless the Decree expressly declares the contrary, or unless those works are of such a nature that they presuppose the state of grace.

Thus, *e.g.*, the visit to a church might be made, or an alms given *before* confession or communion, by a person in the state of mortal sin.

But, in order to gain a *plenary* indulgence *in its full extent*, the state of grace does not suffice; it is besides necessary that there should be no voluntary attachment to the lightest sin.

I say, *no voluntary attachment*; for it may happen that, through fragility or the force of habit, a pious person may commit many venial sins to which he has no attachment whatsoever, and which he detests the moment he has committed them. Such sins are no obstacle to the full acquisition of a plenary indulgence.

But, although it is so difficult to gain a plenary indulgence *in its full extent* we must not, on that account, conclude that it is of no use to try to gain one; for if, as most frequently happens, there exists in our hearts an attachment to any venial sin, we do not lose the *whole* benefit of the indulgence. but gain

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it *partially*, and it remits our debts to the Divine justice, in so far as that attachment interposes no barrier to His mercy.

Secondly, it is necessary to have at least the *virtual intention* to gain an indulgence, and it is therefore strongly recommended to form every morning the intention of gaining all the indulgences we can during the day. We may thus gain all those of which we fulfil the conditions, even should we not be aware that to such works, prayers, &c., an indulgence is attached.

Thirdly, all the works prescribed for gaining an indulgence must be performed without any material alteration, or the omission of any notable part of them. Hence, should any one omit, even through ignorance or inadvertence, a notable part of the Litany or Rosary, he would not gain the indulgences granted for the recitation of those prayers. It is, therefore, important to know accurately the conditions on which an indulgence is granted, and perform them with the greatest exactitude.

Fourthly. As it happens not unfrequently that confession, communion, and a visit to a church are prescribed in order to gain an indulgence, it will be well to say a few words about each of them.

1. *Confession*, when prescribed, must be made even by those who are in the state of grace, and have only venial sins to confess ; but in such case absolution is not necessary. The confession must be made either on the day or on the eve of the feast to which the indulgence is attached. An exception to this rule is made in favour of those *who are accustomed* to go to confession every week, who, if they fulfil the conditions required, may gain all the indulgences which occur from one confession to another, even should the interval be *occasionally* more than a week.

2. *Communion*, if required, can be made on the eve of the feast when the indulgence commences at the first vespers. (See the next paragraph.) If no church be expressly designated, it can be made in any church or chapel.

3. *The visit to a church* can be made only on the day itself, from midnight to midnight, when the indulgence is attached to the *natural* day, *e.g.*, to the Sunday; but when it is granted on account of a feast which has first vespers, the visit can almost always be made during the *ecclesiastical* day, that is from first vespers, or about two o'clock on the afternoon of the eve, until the end of twilight on the day of the feast; and this is the case with the indulgences granted in honour of the Saints of our Order, which *all* commence with the first vespers.

The visit must be made to a *public* church or chapel, that is, one to which the faithful have free access. A visit to a *private* oratory or chapel is not sufficient.

When making the visit, prayers are to be recited for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope, that is, for the peace and concord of Christian nations, the extirpation of heresies, and the exaltation of Holy Church. They must be recited devoutly and without any notable *voluntary* distraction. The prayers to be said are not specifically determined, but it is generally considered that the recitation of the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to, &c., five times for those intentions, or of any other equivalent prayers, suffices to fulfil this condition.

By one confession and communion, several indulgences which occur on the same day may be gained, provided that the other conditions are fulfilled (S. R. C. 19, Maii, 1841). Thus, should three indulgences occur for which confession, communion, and

a visit to the church is prescribed, the visit must be made at three distinct times. As it is always uncertain whether we gain a plenary indulgence in its full extent, we may try to gain more than one for ourselves since through the imperfection of our dispositions they may have only a partial effect. We can also gain them *for the souls in purgatory*, when the Decree permits that they may be so applied, and it is one of the most charitable and meritorious acts we can perform.

It is well to remark here, that indulgences are not applied to those holy souls by way of absolution, as to the living, but by way of *suffrage*; that is as an offering or intercession made to God on their behalf. Hence, although indulgences infallibly aid those poor suffering souls very much, yet the precise degree in which they do so is uncertain, and it is consequently the practice of the faithful to try to gain several, even plenary indulgences for the same soul.

II. *Indulgences granted to the members of the Confraternity of the Cord.*—The following list contains the *principal* indulgences granted to the members of this Confraternity, and the conditions for gaining them.

1°. A *plenary* indulgence on the day of admission to the Confraternity.—Conditions: Confession and Communion.

2°. A *plenary* indulgence on the principal feast of the Arch-confraternity.—Conditions: Confession, Communion, and a visit to the church or oratory where the Confraternity is erected, to pray for the intentions of the Pope.

3°. A *plenary* indulgence at the moment of death.—Conditions: Confession, Communion and the invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus with the lips, or, if this is not possible, at least in heart. If Con-

fession and Communion are impossible, it suffices to be truly penitent and invoke the Name of Jesus.

4°. An indulgence of *three years and three quarantines* for assisting at the monthly procession of the Cord of St Francis.

5°. A *plenary* indulgence for assisting at the same procession if they confess, communicate, and pray in the church or oratory of the Confraternity, for the intentions of the Pope.

6°. A *plenary* indulgence on Maunday Thursday, Easter Sunday, the Ascension, and Christmas Day.—Conditions: Confession, Communion, and a visit to the chapel of a Franciscan Church where the Confraternity is established.

By a privilege granted to the members of this Arch-confraternity, the visits to the church or oratory above mentioned can be replaced by the recitation *at home* of five Our Fathers, five Hail Marys, and five Glory be, &c., in honour of the Five Wounds of Our Lord and St. Francis, whenever distance, sickness, or infirmity render the visit morally impossible. (Gregory xv. Bull "*pias Christi*," 10th November 1622.)

Besides the above indulgences the members of the Arch-confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis participate in those granted to the Friars Minor directly and specifically (not, however, by way of extension or communication) and those granted to them as regulars. (Gregory xv., "*Alias*" 27th Junii 1622 et "*pias Christi*," 10th November 1622.) The limits of the work do not allow us to enumerate all these indulgences, we will only mention two of the principal ones which can be gained by any one in the state of grace, *without either Confession or Communion*.

(1.) A *plenary* indulgence *each time* the members recite the Rosary of the seven joys of Our Blessed

Lady (see page 71). (2.) The indulgences of the *Station of the Blessed Sacrament*, so called, because originally the prayers had to be recited before an altar of the Blessed Sacrament. This is the most precious indulgence which the members of this Confraternity enjoy. By reciting six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys, and six Glory be, &c., for the prosperity of the Church and for the intentions of the Pope, they can gain all the indulgences, both plenary and partial, accorded to those who visit the sanctuaries of Rome, Jerusalem, Portiuncula and of St. James in Compostella, and they can do so *each time* they recite those prayers *in any place whatsoever*. As several *plenary indulgences* are attached to the visitation of the above-named sanctuaries, it is easy to understand how great is this privilege since the members can gain them *several times each day* by the recitation of the above prayers. This indulgence was declared authentic by the Sacred Congregation, 31st March 1856, and was confirmed by His Holiness Pius IX., 14th April 1856.*

Finally, we have only to add that *all* the indulgences here enumerated can be *applied to the Souls in purgatory*.

We have thought it well to add a list of the Feasts of the Order on which a *plenary* indulgence can be gained by all the faithful, who, having confessed and communicated, visit a *Franciscan Church* and pray there for the intentions of Our Holy Father the Pope. They are as follows :—

Jan. 14. The Holy Name of Jesus.

„ 16. S.S. Berardus and companions M.M.

* A more complete list of the indulgences granted to this Confraternity may be found in a little work entitled "*Seraphica Chordigerorum Sodalitas*" (Romae, 1866), which has been approved of by a Decree of the Sacred Congregation of indulgences.

Jan.	30.	St. Hyacintha.
"	31.	B. Louisa of Albertonia.
Feb.	5.	S.S. Peter Baptist and companions M.M.
"	22.	St. Margaret of Cortona.
March	5.	St. John Joseph of the Cross.
"	6.	St. Colette.
"	9.	St. Catherine of Bologna.
April	3.	St. Benedict of Philadelpho.
May	13.	St. Peter Regalatus.
"	17.	St. Paschal.
"	20.	St. Bernardine of Siena.
June	13.	St. Anthony of Padua.
"	19.	B. Michelina.
July	9.	S.S. Nicholas and companions M.M.
"	14.	St. Bonaventure.
"	24.	St. Francis Solanus.
August	2.	Our Lady of the Angels or Portiuncula.*
"	12.	St. Clare.
"	19.	St. Louis Bishop.
"	25.	St. Louis King of France.
Sept.	4.	St. Rose of Viterbo.
"	17.	The Stigmata of St. Francis.
"	18.	St. Joseph of Cupertino.
"	24.	St. Pacific of San Severino.
Oct.	4.	Our Holy Father St. Francis.
"	6.	St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds.
"	13.	S.S. Daniel and companions M.M.
"	19.	St. Peter of Alcantara.
"	23.	St. John Capistran.
Nov.	12.	St. Didacus.
"	19.	St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

* On this day all the faithful who confess and communicate can gain a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory, *each time* they make a visit to a Franciscan Church and there pray for the intentions of His Holiness. The visit can be made from first vespers (about two o'clock) on the first, until the end of twilight on the second of August. (S. C. I. 22 Februarii 1847.)

- Nov. 26. St. Leonard of Port Maurice.
 „ 28. St. James of Marchia.
 „ 29. Feast of all the S.S. of the Order of
 St. Francis.
 Dec. 8. The Immaculate Conception of the
 Blessed Virgin Mary.

Finally, we must not omit to mention a great privilege conferred by the Holy See on the members of the Confraternity of the Cord, namely, that of receiving the General Absolution with a plenary indulgence at the moment of death. The form to be used is given in Latin and English at page 29.

CHAPTER VII.

RULES OF THE CONFRATERNITY WHEN IT EXISTS AS A SOCIETY.

IN the fifth chapter are given the conditions required in order to become a member of the Arch-confraternity, and they are *the only ones* necessary in order to enjoy all the privileges and indulgences accorded to it. But when it has been canonically erected in any church or oratory, it constitutes a Society to which all can belong who wear the Cord, provided they observe the special rules laid down for it.* They thus become sharers in the advantages inseparable from a pious association, which are described in the first chapter, and are enabled to co-operate efficaciously with the Church in her efforts to stem the course of impiety, while this union with their brethren aids them powerfully to advance in virtue and piety.

* Each Society may make its own rules. Those which follow are only intended to serve as a model, and may be modified at pleasure by each Society.

RULES.

1. Those persons only who have made their first Communion, and whose conduct is exemplary can be admitted to this Confraternity.

2. Those who wish to become members must give in their names to the president or vice-president, or to the director, by whom they will be read at the monthly meeting, and, should no opposition be made to their admission, they can be received at the following meeting. Members who have grounds for objecting to their admission, must make them known privately to the director. The Council shall decide as to the reception or rejection of such persons.

3. The Council of the Confraternity shall consist of the director, president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The four latter shall be elected annually on the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, the 17th September, by all the members. Candidates for these offices must be approved of by the director before they can become eligible, and consequently their names must be submitted to him privately before the monthly meeting which precedes the election.

4. It shall be the duty of the president to make the necessary arrangements for the monthly meetings and processions, for the reception of new members, &c. The treasurer will receive the contributions and make the necessary payments. The secretary shall keep a list of the members, of the names of candidates, of sick and deceased members, and also an account of all moneys received and expended; which account must be read at the annual meeting, before the new officers are elected.

5. As the end of this Confraternity is the increase of piety and devotion, those who belong to it must be careful to observe the commandments of God and

the Church, to avoid giving scandal or disedification, to give good example, and live like disciples of Christ crucified, whose sacred Passion they are daily to bear in mind. They shall dress as simply as their social position and duties allow, avoiding the extremes of fashion, and showing themselves true children of St. Francis by their contempt for the world and its vanities.

6. They must approach the Sacraments at least once a month, and on the great Feasts of the Church, or within their Octaves. They shall also endeavour to communicate on the principal Feasts of the Order and on those of the Passion in Lent.

7. They shall cultivate a tender devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and recite daily five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory be, &c., in honour of the Five Wounds of Our Lord and St. Francis; to which they may add one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be, &c., for the intentions of the Pope and in order to gain the indulgences of the station of the Blessed Sacrament.

8. They shall assist at the monthly meetings, and contribute according to their means to the fund of the Confraternity.

9. Holy Mass will be offered on the day of the monthly meeting for the welfare of all the members living and deceased.

10. The names of sick members shall be read, and prayers recited for their recovery, at the monthly meetings.

11. The Holy Sacrifice shall be offered as promptly as possible for the repose of the soul of each member who departs this life.

12. Should any members not observe the rules, the Council has power to declare that they no longer form part of this Society, although they will not cease to belong to the Arch-confraternity or enjoy the

privileges and indulgences granted to those who wear the Cord of St. Francis.

CHAPTER VIII.

FORMS FOR THE BLESSING OF THE CORD AND FOR THE GENERAL ABSOLUTION.

The Candidate kneels before the Priest, who wears a surplice and stole.

V. Adjutorium nostrum
in nomine Domini.

R. Qui fecit cælum et
terram.

V. Ora pro nobis, beate
Pater Francisce.

R. Ut digni efficiamur
promissionibus Christi.

V. Domine, exaudi ora-
tionem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te
veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus.

Deus, qui ut servum re-
dimeres, Filium tuum per
manus impiorum ligari
voluisti: benedic, ✠ quæ-
sumus, Funem istum, et
præsta, ut Famulus tuus,
qui eo, velut ligamine pœ-
nitentiali sui corporis cin-
getur, vinculorum ejusdem
Domini nostri Jesu Christi
perpetuo memor existat, et
in statu devotionis, quem
assumit, perenniter perse-

V. Our help is in the
name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven
and earth.

V. Pray for us, O Holy
Father St. Francis.

R. That we may be made
worthy of the promises of
Christ.

V. O Lord, hear my
prayer.

R. And let my cry come
unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with
thee.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God, who, that Thou
mightest redeem a slave, didst
will that Thy Son should be
bound by the hands of the
wicked; bless, ✠ we beseech
Thee, this cord, and grant
that Thy servant being
girded with it as with a
penitential band, may be
ever mindful of the bonds of
the same Jesus Christ, Our
Lord, may persevere in the
devout state which he (or she)

veret, tuisque cum affectu
semper obsequiis se alli-
gatum esse cognoscat. Per
eumdem Christum, &c.
R. Amen.

Oremus.

Omnipotens sempiterne
Deus, qui omnibus pecca-
toribus quærentibus veni-
am et misericordiam, quæ-
sita et optata, misericor-
diter tribuisti: oramus im-
mensam clementiam tuam,
ut Funem istum benedi-
cere ✠ et sanctificare ✠
digneris; ut quicumque
eo pro peccatis suis cinctus
fuerit, et clementiam
tuam imploraverit, meritis
et intercessione beatissimi
servi tui Patris nostri
Francisci veniam et indul-
gentiam suorum peccato-
rum, fructumque tuæ sanc-
tæ misericordiæ consequatur.
Per Christum Domi-
num nostrum. *R. Amen.*

now embraces, and recognise
with his (or her) whole heart
that he (or she) is perpetually
attached to Thy service.
Through the same Christ
our Lord, &c. *R. Amen.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting
God, who, to sinners seeking
pardon and mercy, hast ever
granted the things they
sought and desired: we im-
plore Thy immense clemency,
that Thou wouldst deign to
bless ✠ and sanctify ✠ this
cord; that whoever wears
it in a penitential spirit,
and implores Thy clemency,
may, through the interces-
sion of Thy most blessed
servant St. Francis, obtain
pardon and remission of
all his (or her) sins, and
participate in the fruits
of Thy holy compassion.
Through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

*The Priest then sprinkles the cord with holy water, and
invests the person with it.*

Accipe chordam beati
Patris nostri Francisci, in
signum timoris, temper-
antiæ et castitatis, ut sint
lumbi tui præcincti. In
nomine Patris, ✠ et Filii,
et Spiritus Sancti. *Amen.*

Receive the cord of our
Holy Father St. Francis,
and let it serve thee as an
admonition to temperance,
chastity, and the fear of
God. In the name of the
Father, ✠ and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Deus, qui Ecclesiam tu-
am, beati Patris nostri
Francisci meritis fœtu no-

O God, who, through the
merits of our Holy Father
St. Francis, dost bless Thy

væ prolis amplificas; tribue nobis ex ejus imitatione terrena despicere, et cœlestium donorum semper participatione gaudere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. *R. Amen.*

Church with a new offspring; grant that imitating him, we may despise earthly things, and ever rejoice in the participation of heavenly gifts. Through Christ our Lord. *R. Amen.*

The Priest then adds :

Ego auctoritate qua fungor, et mihi concessa, recipio te, et suscipio ad participationem omnium bonorum spiritualium quæ in toto Ordine Seraphici Patris nostri Francisci, ex gratia Dei, peraguntur. In nomine Patris, ✠ et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris, ✠ et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super te et maneat semper. *R. Amen.*

I, by the authority granted to me, receive and admit thee to the participation of all the good works which through the grace of God are performed in the whole Order of our Seraphic Father St. Francis. In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Ghost descend upon thee and abide with thee for ever. *R. Amen.*

II. GENERAL ABSOLUTION WITH PLENARY INDULGENCE AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

The Confiteor having been recited, the Priest says the Misereatur, &c., and then adds :

Dominus noster Jesus Christus, per merita suæ sacratissimæ Passionis, te absolvat, et gratiam suam tibi infundat. Et ego, auctoritate ipsius, et beatorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et Summorum Pontificum mihi in hac parte commissa, absolvo te ab omni vinculo excommunicationis et

May our Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of His Sacred Passion, absolve thee and pour His grace upon thee. And I, by His authority and that of His holy Apostles S.S. Peter and Paul, and of the Sovereign Pontiffs, which has been committed to me, absolve thee from every

interdicti, si quod incurristi, et restituo te unitati et communioni fidelium, necnon sanctis Sacramentis Ecclesiæ. Item eadem auctoritate absolvo te a peccatis tuis, tibi que relaxo omnes pœnas purgatorii, quas pro peccatis commissis meruisti, concedens tibi remissionem et indulgentiam plenariam omnium peccatorum tuorum, et restituo te illi innocentiae in qua eras quando baptizatus fuisti. In nomine Patris, ✠ et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Quod si hac vice non discesseris, reservo tibi hanc gratiam usque ad extremum tuæ mortis articulum.

bond of excommunication and interdict thou mayest have incurred, and restore thee to the unity and communion of the faithful, and to the participation of the holy Sacraments. By the same authority I also absolve thee from thy sins, and free thee from all the pains of purgatory thou hast merited by them, granting the remission and plenary indulgence of all thy sins; and I restore thee to thy baptismal innocence. In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

If your soul should not now depart, I reserve this favour until the very moment of your death.

CHAPTER IX.

DEVOTIONS FOR THE MONTHLY MEETINGS.

The hymn *Veni Creator*.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,
Mentes tuorum visita,
Imple superna gratia
Quæ tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,
Altissimi Donum Dei,
Fons vivus, Ignis, Caritas,
Et spiritalis Unctio.

Tu, septiformis munere,
Digitus Paternæ dexteræ
Tu, rite promissum Patris,
Sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus,
Infunde amorem cordibus,
Infirma nostri corporis
Virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius,
Pacemque dones protinus;
Ductore sic te prævio
Vitemus omne noxium.

Teque utriusque Spiritum
Credamus omni tempore.

Per te sciamus da Patrem,
Noscamus atque Filium,

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Et Filio, qui a mortuis
Surrexit, ac Paraclito,
In sæculorum sæcula.

Amen.

Extra Tempus paschale.

Deo patri sit gloria
Ejusque soli Filio
Cum Spiritu paraclito,
Nunc et per omne sæculum. Amen.

V. Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur.

R. Et renovabis faciem terræ.

OREMUS.

Deus qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritus illustratione docuisti; da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere, et de ejus semper consolatione gaudere. Per Dominum, &c.

Then the following Antiphon and prayer are said :

ANTIPHON : *Cælorum Candor.*

The Heavens shone forth with new splendour and a bright star arose in the firmament, when St. Francis appeared to the wondering eyes of men. Whilst in heart, in word, and in work, he sought to reproduce the image of the Cross, a Seraph appeared to him and impressed the Wounds of Jesus in his hands, feet, and side.

V. Thou hast signed, O Lord, Thy servant St. Francis.

R. With the marks of our redemption.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, when the world was growing cold, didst renew the sacred marks of Thy Passion in the flesh of Our Holy Father St. Francis, that Thou mightest inflame our hearts with Thy

love ; mercifully grant that through His merits and intercession we may constantly bear our cross and bring forth worthy fruits of penance. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

After this, the director gives an instruction.

Then follows the procession, during which a hymn is sung in honour of the Passion, or of St. Francis.*

The members then recite with outstretched arms, along with the director, the following prayers in honour of the Five Wounds.

1. *To the wound of the right hand.*

O Jesus ! I adore the sacred wound of Thy right hand, and humbly beg pardon of all my sins, the grace of true repentance and amendment of my life. *Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to, &c.*

2. *To the wound of the left hand.*

O Jesus ! I adore the sacred wound of Thy left hand, and humbly beg Thou wilt direct my hands to do good works for the love of Thee. *Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to, &c.*

3. *To the wound of the right foot.*

O Jesus ! I adore the sacred wound of Thy right foot, and humbly beg pardon for not having, as I ought, walked in the way of Thy holy commandments. *Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to, &c.*

4. *To the wound of the left foot.*

O Jesus ! I adore the sacred wound of Thy left foot, and humbly beg I may walk after Thee, in the way of Thy holy cross to the end of my life. *Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to, &c.*

* Should it be impossible to have the procession, the Rosary of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin may be recited instead.

5. *To the wound of the side.*

O Jesus ! I adore Thy bleeding heart pierced with a spear, and humbly beg Thou wouldst fill my heart with a pure and ardent love of Thee. *Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to, &c.*

Another *Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be, &c.*, are here added for the intentions of the Pope and to gain the indulgences of the station of the Blessed Sacrament.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the redemption of mankind, didst endure most grievous wounds in Thy hands, feet, and side ; grant me, I beseech Thee, for the sake of those dear wounds, pardon of all my sins ; to end my life in Thy grace and favour, and for ever to enjoy Thee in heaven, who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Or they may sing the following verses, reciting the *Our Father, &c.*, with outstretched arms.

1. *To the wound of the right hand.*

Hail sacred wound of Christ's right hand,
Whose holy blood the world does save ;
Grant on the right we all may stand,
When summon'd from the silent grave.
Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

2. *To the wound of the left hand.*

Hail Christ's left hand thus wounded sore,
And bleeding for the sons of Eve !
O Thou, who mercy hast in store,
Mercy may all from Thee receive.
Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

C

3. *To the wound of the right foot.*

Hail wound of Christ's right foot, with pain
Most pungent, pierc'd ! Oh fill our mind
With love, with hope ; hope, not in vain
In Thee sweet Saviour of mankind.
Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

4. *To the wound of the left foot.*

Hail wound of Christ's left foot ! all hail !
From Thee alone all graces flow ;
When fierce temptations us assail,
Oh save us from the dang'rous foe !
Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

5. *To the wound of the side.*

Hail wound of Christ's love-bleeding Heart,
The source of endless happiness,
When from this world we must depart,
Conduct us to eternal bliss.
Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

Then say :

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the redemption of mankind, didst endure most grievous wounds in Thy hands, feet and side ; grant me, I beseech Thee, for the sake of those dear wounds, pardon of all my sins ; to end my life in Thy grace and favour, and for ever to enjoy Thee in heaven, who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

A hymn is then sung and a collection made, after which the meeting may be closed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

CHAPTER X.

DEVOTIONS FOR THE USE OF THE MEMBERS IN
PRIVATE.

WE will speak in the first place of the principal and distinctive devotion of the members of the Arch-confraternity, namely, the daily recitation of the Our Fathers, &c., in honour of the Wounds of Our Lord and St. Francis. It is not necessary to add any other prayer to these ; but one of the five short prayers given below may be recited before each Our Father, &c., by those who find that they are thereby excited to greater fervour.

It is the general custom in the Seraphic Order to recite these prayers with outstretched arms, and it is one of the most ancient and commendable that exists among the children of St. Francis.

"The saying these *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys*, with the arms stretched out, is in honour of the cruel stretching the arms of Jesus Christ, who, in this posture, was nailed to a cross, and hung thereon, from the third to the ninth hour, in great pain and torment, for our sins. This posture of prayer is not only pleasing to God, when used thus in honour of Christ's suffering, but seems to have been pre-figured by Moses praying for the Israelites with his arms thus stretched out ; concerning which we read in the book of Exod. ch. xvii. that when Amalec had opposed the people of God in their passage into the land of Canaan, Moses commanded Joshua, the captain of the Israelites, to encounter the enemy and force his passage ; but sensible as he was that God must give the victory, he, himself, retired with Aaron and Hur to the top of a neighbouring hill. Here he continued praying during the battle, with

his arms extended ; he was more than once so tired with this painful posture, that he could not continue it without interruption ; and the Scripture particularly observes, that while Moses had his hands lifted up Israel overcame, but if he let them down Amalec had the better : whereupon Moses sat down upon a stone, and Aaron and Hur placing themselves one on each side of him, supported his hands until sun-set, when Joshua obtained a complete victory. It is evident from this Scripture account, that the victory was not owing to the prayer alone of Moses, but also to the posture he used in prayer, as a condition requisite ; and Moses in transmitting this fact to memory by the special command of God, did not even mention his prayer. It also evidently appears, that the posture he used and prayed in, was the form of a cross, or with his arms stretched out. From hence it may be justly inferred, that if this posture or manner of praying was then so acceptable to God, and without doubt, because it represented the posture in which His divine Son was to die upon the cross, and thereby entirely overcome the devil, the infernal spiritual Amalec ; and by the merits of His cross to procure safety and redemption to mankind : this same posture of praying is now more acceptable when performed in a daily remembrance, and in honour of that sacred Passion of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer."

While strongly recommending this pious practice, we must nevertheless remind the members that true and solid piety always shuns singularity, and endeavours as much as possible to avoid drawing the attention of men to its good works and practices of devotion. They should, therefore, take care not to pray in this posture *in public*, or in presence of those who are not members of this Confraternity or of the Franciscan Order ; lest it should draw the

eyes of others upon them, and, on account of its singularity, rather offend than edify.

SHORT PRAYERS WHEN SAYING THE OUR FATHERS,
HAIL MARY, &c.

1. O Jesus! by the cruel pains of thy right hand, have mercy on me a sinner. *Our Father, &c.*

2. O Jesus! by the cruel pains of thy left hand, be merciful to me a sinner. *Our Father, &c.*

3. O Jesus! by the cruel pains of thy right foot, have mercy on me a sinner. *Our Father, &c.*

4. O Jesus! by the cruel pains of thy left foot, be merciful to me a sinner. *Our Father, &c.*

5. O Jesus! by thy sacred side pierced with a spear, have mercy on me now and at the hour of my death. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to, &c.*

Here another Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory, &c., may be added for the intentions of the Pope, and to gain the indulgences.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

This devotion ought to be particularly dear to the members of the Confraternity, on account of its origin, its object, and the indulgences attached to it.

Its origin is eminently Franciscan. The faithful from the earliest ages of the Church, loved to traverse the road by which Our Lord was led from the palace of Pilate to Calvary, venerating the spots hallowed by His footsteps, and meditating on the mysteries of His sufferings and love. When in the fourteenth century it became difficult to visit those scenes in person, the Franciscan Fathers of the Observance, who then, as now, were charged with the care of the Holy Places, frequently erected in their churches a series of paintings representing several points of Our Lord's journey, and the principal incidents which

marked it; that the faithful, visiting those places, at least *in spirit*, might be excited to a lively recollection of His sufferings, and be inflamed more and more with his love.

Until the year 1726, only the members of the three Orders of St. Francis and of the Cord could gain the indulgences attached to this holy exercise; but in that year Benedict XIII. extended this privilege to all the faithful, and in 1731 Clement XII. authorised its erection in churches and oratories not belonging to the Franciscan Order, provided it were done by the Friars-Minor. At the present day the faculty of erecting it is frequently granted to other religious and to secular priests.

The end of this devotion being the meditation of the sufferings of Our Lord; it should be specially dear to the heart of all the members of this Confraternity, instituted in honour of the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, and they should endeavour, particularly on Fridays and in Lent, to follow this holy Way in company with Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, learning lessons of sorrow for sin and love of suffering, lessons of humility, patience and contempt for the world, and augmenting in their hearts the love of God and zeal for His glory.

They should also have a great esteem for this devotion, because of the indulgences attached to it, and the facility of the conditions on which they are granted. *Each time* we make the Way of the Cross in the state of grace, we gain all the indulgences accorded to those who visit personally the Holy Places. These indulgences are very numerous, and cannot be enumerated in detail. It suffices to say that by performing this exercise we can gain *several plenary* indulgences. Neither Confession nor Communion is required; the state of grace suffices. It is only prescribed to pass from Station to Station, or if

infirmity, or the crowded state of the church, render this very difficult, to turn successively towards each Station, meditating on the part of Our Lord's sufferings it represents, or if incapable of this, meditating piously on His Passion in general. Although no vocal prayers whatever are necessary, it is the general custom of the faithful to recite some prayers, and for the convenience of the members we subjoin an exercise for the Way of the Cross taken from one composed by St. Leonard of Port Maurice, a Franciscan of the Observance.

We think it well to mention that Clement XIV. has made a concession in favour of those who are *physically or morally incapable* of visiting a church where the Stations are erected. Such persons may gain the indulgences of the Way of the Cross on condition that they obtain a crucifix blessed by one of the superiors of a Franciscan monastery, or by any priest who has obtained a special faculty to that effect, and hold it in their hands while reciting fourteen Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory be, &c., corresponding to the fourteen Stations of the Way of the Cross; then five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory be, &c.; and finally, one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be, &c., for the intentions of the Pope. This crucifix cannot be sold, lent, or given to another in order to gain the indulgences.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

An Act of Contrition.

O my sweetest Jesus ! I love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things, and I am sorry from my heart for having offended Thee, because Thou art

my sovereign good ; oh may I never offend Thee any more.

I humbly implore Thine assistance, O my divine Redeemer, in order that I may perform this holy exercise in such a manner as to obtain Thy mercy in this life, and Thy glory in the next. Amen.

FIRST STATION.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee,

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Let us meditate upon the admirable submission with which Jesus, though innocence itself, receives His sentence. Let us remember that our sins dictate it. Let us then turn our eyes towards this God so full of love, and our hearts filled with the most lively sorrow, let us say to Him more by our tears than by our words :

O sweetest Jesus ! to what an excess Thou hast carried Thy love for me. Is it indeed true that for a creature so unworthy Thou hast allowed Thyself to be imprisoned, loaded with chains, torn with scourges, and at length condemned to a most shameful death ? Surely this is enough to rouse my soul from its coldness and tepidity, and cause me to detest all my sins, particularly those which I have committed by my tongue ! Yes, my Jesus, I detest them, and, during the whole course of this sorrowful exercise, will never cease to bitterly lament them, crying to Thee, O my Jesus, have pity on me, —my Jesus, mercy. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls of the Faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

SECOND STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us consider with what eagerness Jesus embraces His Cross, with what meekness He endures the cruel treatment of His executioners, and the outrages of an angry mob. And we cannot bear the slightest pain or trouble. We fly from the sight of the least suffering. We forget that, unless we bear our cross, we shall never enter heaven.

O my Jesus, it is not Thou, but I who ought to carry this cross so heavy and so painful, for my sins have made it. My sweet Saviour, give me strength to embrace generously for the future all the crosses which Thou mayest please to send me. Give me grace to die clasping the Cross, and while pressing it with love to my lips, may I say, with St. Teresa, "Either to suffer or to die! either to suffer or to die!"

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

THIRD STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us contemplate Jesus, in His sorrowful journey, weakened by the loss of blood which flows from His many wounds, falling for the first time on the ground. With what fury the executioners push Him, kick Him, and shower upon Him blows without number, and yet, this sweet Jesus does not utter one word of complaint. He suffers all in silence. It is not so with us. We cannot bear the

slightest contradiction without murmuring and complaining, perhaps, even give ourselves up to frightful imprecations and blasphemies. From this time forth let us detest with our whole hearts our impatience and our pride, and let us beg of our compassionate Saviour to raise us up when we fall.

My good Jesus, my amiable Redeemer, Thou seest at Thy feet a great sinner, the most guilty of all sinners upon the face of the earth. Oh how many shameful falls have I not to reproach myself with? How many times have I not fallen into the lowest depths of sin and wickedness? Deign, O Jesus! I beseech Thee, to stretch out to me a helping hand, and bring me back to Thee once more. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

FOURTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

What an increase of pain for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the most Pure Heart of Mary when the Son and the Mother meet each other on the way to Calvary. "Ungrateful souls," says the afflicted Mother to us, "what have you done to my Son?" and "What sorrow have you caused to My poor Mother," says this compassionate Jesus; "renounce sin which has been the cause of our sufferings."

O adorable Son of Mary! O holy Mother of my Jesus! behold me prostrate at your feet, covered with confusion, and penetrated with grief. I acknowledge my perfidy. It is I, miserable sinner

that I am, who by my sins have forged the cruel sword which has pierced your hearts. But I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart, and sincerely detest them, and beg of you both to pardon me. Mercy, O my Jesus ; mercy, O Mary, mercy. Under the shelter of your mercy, I will never again fall into sin ; but on the contrary, will meditate night and day on your sufferings and your sorrows. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

FIFTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let each of us imagine that he is that Cyrenean who is compelled to carry the Cross of Jesus with repugnance, and against His will. Let us then rouse ourselves up in reality from the shameful torpor into which we have fallen, and assist our Blessed Lord in bearing the heavy burden imposed upon Him. Let us willingly embrace every trial which God may please to send us, protesting that we are ready to bear all, not only with patience, but also with thankfulness.

O my Sweet Jesus, I thank Thee for the many occasions Thou hast given me to suffer for Thee ; thereby enriching me with merits. Grant, O my God, that in supporting with patience the apparent evils of this life, I may gain the true and everlasting rewards of the next ; and that in weeping with Thee here below, I may be rendered worthy of sharing Thy happiness in Paradise. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

SIXTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us look upon the disfigured features of our Blessed Saviour impressed upon the linen cloth. Transported with love at the sight, let us strive to reproduce this mysterious image in our souls also. Too happy if we may live carrying Jesus engraven in our hearts; more happy still if we are permitted to die with this precious pledge of our salvation.

O my sweet Saviour, deign, I beseech Thee, to impress Thy sacred Image in such a manner upon my heart, that day and night I may continually think of Thee: and that having always before my eyes Thy most bitter Passion, I may weep without ceasing for my many and most grievous sins. I protest that I wish to lead the life of a penitent until the last moment of my existence, detesting ever more and more my past errors.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

SEVENTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us contemplate our divine Saviour stretched upon the earth, overwhelmed by His sufferings, trampled on by His executioners, and insulted by

the populace ; and reflect that it is our pride which has cast Him upon the ground. Let us, therefore, restrain our inordinate self-esteem, and with a sincere sorrow for the past, let us resolve for the future to humble ourselves before every one.

O my adorable Redeemer, although I see Thee stretched upon the earth, I nevertheless acknowledge Thee as the all-powerful God, and I beg of Thee to extinguish in my heart all thoughts of pride, ambition, and self-love. Grant that, never losing sight of the remembrance of my sins, which ought to cover me with confusion, I may, from this time forward, embrace, with my whole heart, abjection and contempt. May I, by a true and sincere humility, which is so agreeable to Thee, comfort Thee in the humiliations Thou hast undergone for me. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

EIGHTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us here consider that we have a double motive for grief :—we ought to weep for Jesus who suffers so much for us, and we ought to weep for ourselves who take so much pleasure in offending Him. And yet, ungrateful creatures as we are, we remain unmoved at the sight of so much sorrow.

O my sweet Saviour, why is not my heart broken with sorrow ? O dearest Jesus, the tears I ask of Thee are those of compassion and contrition. May

I, with tearful eyes and sorrowful heart, merit to have the same tenderness shown to me as Thou didst display to the women of Jerusalem. Deign, O blessed Lord, for my consolation, to watch over me during my life, so that I may be able to look upon Thee with confidence at the hour of my death Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

NINTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

How painful must be this third fall of our Blessed Lord. Let us consider with what rage the executioners pull Him about on every side, and drag Him along in the dust. See how they strike and kick this sweet Lamb, who bears all with the most exemplary patience. O cursed sin, which has caused the Son of God to be so cruelly treated. Does not a God, so overwhelmed with reproaches and outrages, deserve our tears? Oh let us weep for our many sins, and say to Him:—

O Almighty God, whose power sustains the heavens and the earth, what has cast Thee prostrate on the ground this third time? My repeated falls and multiplied sins, which have heaped torments upon torments on Thee, have done this. But behold me now at Thy feet, firmly resolved to put an end to all the disorders of my life, and with sighs and tears repeating a thousand times: O my God, I will never more offend Thee.—No, never more. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

TENTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us consider the torments Jesus endures at this time. His sacred flesh clinging to His clothes, is torn off in strips, while His mouth is filled with bitter and nauseous gall. To His other tortures is joined the shame of seeing Himself exposed to the gaze of a rude and scoffing multitude. See how our divine Saviour makes satisfaction for our immodesty and vanity; our intemperance and drunkenness. Is it possible that our hearts are not filled with compassion for our dear Lord?

O Jesus, innocent victim, what a dreadful contrast! Thou art covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, and overwhelmed with bitterness, while I am absorbed in pleasure, vanity, ease, and comfort. This cannot be the proper way to follow Thee. Oh give me grace to change my manner of life. Mix some bitterness, some sorrow, with the pleasures of this life, that henceforth I may go with eagerness to quench my thirst in the bitter waters of Thy most sorrowful Passion, that thus I may one day merit to enjoy with Thee the delights of Paradise. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

ELEVENTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us consider the intense pain which our adorable Saviour undergoes as the nails pierce His hands and feet. The flesh is torn, the bones crushed and broken, and the nerves drawn up with the most exquisite torture. How is it that we are not moved to the inmost recesses of our hearts at the sight of such cruel torments, when we remember that our sins have been the cause of their infliction? Let us at least express our contrition by saying with the deepest sorrow :—

O Jesus, crucified for my sake, soften my hardened heart, and penetrate it with sentiments of fear and love; and because my sins have driven the nails into Thy sacred hands and feet, grant that penance and mortification, taking the place of the executioner, may crucify all my unruly passions, so that having had the happiness of living and dying attached to the Cross with Thee, I may one day be admitted to reign with Thee in heaven. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

TWELFTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us raise our eyes and contemplate our sweet Saviour hanging between heaven and earth. Listen to the words which come from His dying lips. He prays for His executioners. He gives Paradise to the repentant thief. He confides His blessed Mother to

the care of St. John. He recommends His soul to His Heavenly Father. He bows His sacred head. He expires. Jesus is then dead. He has died upon the cross for love of us. Oh, what are now the sentiments of our hearts? Do not let us leave this Station without a heartfelt sorrow for our sins, and a firm resolution of never sinning any more. Let us cast our arms around the cross of Jesus and say to Him:

My sweetest Jesus, I acknowledge that my numberless iniquities have been the pitiless executioners who have taken Thy most sacred life. Yes, I am the traitor who has crucified Thee, and I confess that I do not deserve forgiveness; but hearing Thee pray for Thy executioners, what consolation at once fills my soul! What then shall I do for the love of Thee, Who hast done so much for the love of me? Behold me ready to do all that Thou mayest command, ready, above all, to pardon whoever may have offended or injured me, and, in consequence of this, I hope to hear Thee say to me also at my last hour, "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

THIRTEENTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us meditate on the sword of sorrow which pierced the heart of this inconsolable Mother, when she received into her arms the inanimate body of her Divine Son. She examines one by one the wound,

D

which cover It, and the sight of these causes all the wounds of her maternal heart to bleed afresh. But what is the sharpest sword that pierces this tender and loving heart? It is sin, sin which has destroyed the life of her dearly-beloved Son. Let us then detest sin more and more, and mingling our tears with those of this most desolate Virgin, let us say to her :

O thou Queen of Martyrs ! when shall I be able to understand thy sorrows, and sympathise with them by keeping them constantly in my heart? Grant, O Mother of Sorrows, that I may weep day and night for my criminal excesses, and after having passed my life in acts of contrition, love, and hope, I may die of grief, so as to live eternally with thee in heaven. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

FOURTEENTH STATION.

V. We adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Let us here meditate upon the great grief experienced by St. John, St. Mary Magdalen, the other holy women, and by all the faithful disciples of our blessed Lord, when they placed His sacred body in the tomb ; but above all, let us consider the extreme desolation of the most pure heart of Mary when she found herself totally deprived of that Son whom she so dearly loved. At the sight of so much sorrow, let us blush if, in the course of this holy exercise, we have felt but few sentiments of piety and com-

passion. Let us now reanimate our fervour ; and, leave our hearts in the tomb with our blessed Lord, at the same time humbly asking Him, with feelings of the deepest sorrow and contrition, to enclose them in His most Sacred Heart :

O merciful Jesus, who for the love of me, a poor miserable sinner, didst willingly make this sorrowful journey to Calvary, I adore Thee now in this sepulchre in which Thou art laid. But I wish to bury Thee still more deeply in my heart, so that I may rise with Thee to a new life, and persevere to the end in Thy grace. Grant, therefore, O Lord, I beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy most bitter Passion, that my last words may be the sacred names of JESUS and MARY—and that my last sigh may blend with that which Thou didst breathe forth for me upon the cross ; that thus animated with a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity, I may die for Thee, in order to be allowed to reign with Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord,

R. Have mercy upon us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

We have added here the beautiful Sequence Stabat Mater, of which a verse is often said or sung while passing from Station to Station.

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrymosa
Dum pendebat Filius.
Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti !
Quæ mœrebat, et dolebat,
Pia Mater dum videbat
Nati pœnas incliti.

Quis est homo qui non fletet,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio ?
Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio ?

Pre peccatis suæ gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem Natum
Moriendo desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eja Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last :
Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had passed.

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother, highly blest,
Of the sole-begotten One !
Christ above in torment hangs ;
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
'Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold ?
Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold ?

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender Child,
All with bloody scourges rent ;
For the sins of His own nation,
Saw Him hang in desolation
Till His spirit forth He sent.

O thou Mother ! fount of love,
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord
Make me feel as thou hast felt ;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.
Tui Nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum divide.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.
Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

Virgo Virginum præclara
Mihi jam non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.
Flammis ne urar succensus,
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die judicii.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
Da per Matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriæ.
Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animæ donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.

Holy Mother ! pierce me through ;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified ;
Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torment died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live :
By the cross with thee to stay ;
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins best !
Listen to my fond request :
Let me share thy grief divine ;
Let me to my latest breath
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
Steep my soul till it hath swooned
In his very Blood away ;
Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
Lest in flames I burn and die
In His awful judgment day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
Be Thy Mother my defence,
Be Thy Cross my victory :
While my body here decays,
May my soul Thy goodness praise
Safe in Paradise with Thee. Amen.

INDULGENCED PRAYER, TO BE RECITED BEFORE a CRUCIFIX.

Plenary, to all who shall devoutly say the following prayer before any representation of Jesus crucified, after confession and communion.



O good and sweetest Jesus, before Thy face I humbly kneel, and with the greatest fervour of spirit I pray and beseech Thee to vouchsafe to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a most firm purpose of amendment; whilst I contemplate with great sorrow and affection Thy five Wounds, and ponder them over in my mind, having before my eyes the words which, long ago, David the prophet spoke in his own person concerning Thee, my Jesus: "Foderunt manus Meas et pedes Meos: dinumeraverunt omnia ossa Mea,"—"They digged My hands and My feet; they numbered all My bones." Ps. xxi. 17, 18.

ANOTHER INDULGENCED PRAYER.

i. Three hundred days for every time that the following invocations are said.

ii. Seven years and seven quarantines to all priests who say them after Mass, and to others, not priests, who say them after Holy Communion.

iii. Plenary once a month to all who say them at least once a day.

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification ;
Body of Christ, be my salvation.
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins ;
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains ;
Passion of Christ, my comfort be.
O good Jesus, listen to me.
In Thy wounds I fain would hide,
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side ;
Guard me should the foe assail me ;
Call me when my life shall fail me ;
Bid me come to Thee above,
With Thy saints to sing Thy love.
World without end. Amen.

PRAYER COMPOSED BY ST. FRANCIS.

Absorbeat, quæso Domine, mentem meam ab omnibus quæ sub cælo sunt, ignita et melliflua vis amoris tui : ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori : per temetipsum Filium Dei, qui cum patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

TRANSLATION.

I beseech Thee, O Lord, that the sweet and consuming fire of Thy love may withdraw my heart from all earthly things : that I may die through love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die through love of me. I ask it through Thyself, O Son of God, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

DEVOUT PRAYER WHEN PUTTING ON THE CORD.

O Almighty and merciful Lord God, girding myself with this cord, in imitation of Thy holy and faithful servant St. Francis, I beseech Thee, by his

merits and intercession, to take from me the spirit of pride and covetousness, and give me grace to copy his example of humility and poverty, that I may the more perfectly imitate the life and passion of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

LITANY OF ST. FRANCIS.

Lord have mercy on us. Christ have mercy on us.
 Lord have mercy on us.

Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven.

God the Son, Redeemer of
 the world.

God the Holy Ghost.

Holy Trinity one God.

Holy Mary conceived without sin.

Holy Mary, Mother of God.

Holy Mary, patroness of the Fran-
 ciscan Order.

} Have mercy on us.

} Pray for us.

St. Francis, Founder of the Seraphic Order.

St. Francis, Amiable Father.

St. Francis, Admirable Father.

St. Francis, Benevolent Father.

St. Francis, Venerable Father.

St. Francis, Sure guide of thy children.

St. Francis, Standard-bearer of Jesus Christ.

St. Francis, Soldier of the Cross.

St. Francis, Faithful imitator of the Son of God.

St. Francis, Seraph full of ardour.

St. Francis, Furnace of love.

St. Francis, Ark of sanctity.

St. Francis, Vessel of purity.

St. Francis, Model of perfection.

St. Francis, Spouse of holy poverty.

} Pray for us.

St. Francis, Mirror of chastity.
 St. Francis, True model of penance.
 St. Francis, Example of humility.
 St. Francis, Master of obedience.
 St. Francis, Angel of meekness.
 St. Francis, Example of every virtue.
 St. Francis, Patriarch of the poor.
 St. Francis, Lover of peace.
 St. Francis, Hater of the world.
 St. Francis, Extirpator of vice.
 St. Francis, Bright light of thy country.
 St. Francis, Conqueror of demons.
 St. Francis, Zealous for the salvation of souls.
 St. Francis, Light of the blind.
 St. Francis, Physician of the sick.
 St. Francis, Herald of the King of kings.
 St. Francis, Light of the nations.
 St. Francis, Martyr by desire.
 St. Francis, Lover of the Cross.
 St. Francis, Apostle of the infidels.
 St. Francis, Propagator of the faith.
 St. Francis, Column of the Church.
 St. Francis, { Abraham of the New Law by
 thy numerous posterity.
 St. Francis, { who hast received the stigmata
 of Jesus.

Pray for us.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, Hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us.

Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us.

V. Pray for us, O holy Father St. Francis.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who by multiplying the children of St. Francis dost give new glory to Thy Church ; grant that, following his example, we may despise the honours and riches of this world, and obtain those of a blessed eternity. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. FRANCIS.

O Seraphic Father St. Francis ! I revere in thee the living image of Christ crucified. Born like Him in a stable, thou didst contemn a world which rejected thee ; poor like Him, thou didst esteem no possessions but those which are eternal ; meek and humble like Him, thou didst count confusion and humiliation a joy ; inflamed with an ardent charity, thou didst burn to increase His glory ; thy love transformed thy whole life into one long martyrdom, and made thee strive by penitential works to satisfy the ardour of thy desires, until at last it impressed on thy body the Wounds it had long before engraved deeply on thy heart, and made thee a living crucifix preaching sweetly to men the sufferings and love of Jesus.

Obtain for me, O Holy Father, that I too may banish from my heart the spirit of the world ; that I may esteem poverty and humiliations above wealth and honours ; that I may mortify my passions and advance daily in the knowledge and love of God, until at last, detached from myself, from the world, and from all creatures, I may live for God alone, and like thee, may say with my whole heart : My God and my all, my inheritance and my joy in time and eternity. Amen.

NOVENA IN HONOUR OF OUR HOLY FATHER
ST. FRANCIS.*

FIRST DAY.

Humility of St. Francis.

Precisely in the same degree that St. Francis became great in the eyes of men, he became little in his own. He considered himself the greatest sinner in the world, and could never be induced to receive the priesthood. In order to lower himself in the opinion of those who revered his virtues, he published his faults, and got his companions to heap injuries and reproaches upon him ; then, after listening to them with a countenance full of joy, he thanked them for having told him the truth without disguise. It was his greatest happiness to obey others ; although the founder of his Order, he relinquished its government, and said that he would obey as cheerfully the youngest as the oldest in the Order. Holy Church, the best judge of virtue, calls him by excellence *the humble* St. Francis, and it is said that as a recompense for his profound humility God has given him one of the highest places left vacant by the rebel angels, whose pride was the cause of their fall.

PRAYER.

O Sweet Saviour ! it was in Thy school that St. Francis studied that profound humility, and advanced therein with giant strides ; and I, who am covered with sins, am unable to subdue the pride of my heart. Let Thy holy grace aid me to humble myself as I

* Taken from one printed in Rome for the solemn Novena at Ara-cœli.

ought, and in order that the spirit of pride may never more lead me into error, grant that, like St. Francis, I may embrace the humiliations of Thy Cross. O glorious St. Francis ! may I ever strive to imitate thy humility : may I love, like thee, to see myself trampled upon by all men, and may I never forget that my true happiness consists, not in the honours of this world, but in suffering humiliations, and rejoicing in them for the love of God. Amen. Three Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory be, &c.

SECOND DAY.

On the Poverty of St. Francis.

It may truly be said that evangelical poverty was St. Francis' favourite virtue. His father having pressed him to renounce his patrimony, he gave up all, even his last article of clothing, and from that moment chose poverty as his inheritance. It appeared to him an inestimable gift, which he begged from God with many prayers and tears. When in Rome, he besought the holy Apostles Peter and Paul to obtain it for him ; and they, delighted with so sublime a prayer, assured him that God accorded him the favour he asked. He called poverty his sister, his mother, his spouse, his queen ; he spoke of it with profound emotion ; he lamented that men had so completely neglected it, and did all in his power that they should prize and love it. If he saw any one who appeared poorer and more destitute than himself, he made it the subject of holy self-reproach, and excited in his heart a great jealousy lest he should be surpassed in love for his dear poverty. In a word, no one ever desired riches so ardently as he desired to be poor for the love of God.

PRAYER.

O my Jesus ! who can help being moved in considering the poverty which Thou and Thy Holy Mother didst endure for our sake ? It was on this St. Francis frequently meditated with tears ; and no sooner had he discovered the excellence of a virtue so esteemed and loved by Thee, than he embraced it with ardour, and could find no repose but in its possession. O Lord, grant that, moved by such powerful examples, I may strip myself of all inordinate affection for the things of this world, that so I may be able truly to say, with my Seraphic Father : My God and my all.

O Holy Father ! obtain for me but one drop of that sweetness thou didst find in the practice of poverty ; that so I may no longer regard it with the eyes of a foolish world, but with thine, and may be attracted by the charms it acquired from the poor and lowly lives of Jesus and Mary. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

THIRD DAY.

On the Mortification of St. Francis.

One of the blessed companions of our Holy Father said, that had St. Francis had the strong constitution and robust health he desired, no one would have led so mortified and penitent a life as he would. From the very outset of his religious career he observed so many Lents each year, that but a short interval elapsed between each, so that his fast was almost perpetual. His choicest dish consisted of a few herbs seasoned with ashes or cold water. Whenever it happened that, through sickness, he was compelled to make use of flesh meat, he took care to do penance for this indulgence as soon as he recovered,

by redoubling his austerities. The hair-shirt, the discipline, long vigils and tears, were his delights. He vanquished temptation by rolling himself in the winter snow, on thorns, or on red-hot cinders ; he sought constantly new ways of mortifying his flesh, and had so accustomed his body to suffering, that it seemed to be perfectly submitted to the spirit ; to such an extent, that when the spirit desired to practise some act of virtue, the body, so far from rebelling, appeared on the contrary to co-operate willingly in its performance.

PRAYER.

O my Dear Redeemer ! what a difference between the conduct of St. Francis and mine ! He led so pure a life, and treated himself so severely ; and I, after so many sins, only seek to indulge myself, and the very name of penance fills me with fear. O my God ! may his example arouse me from this dangerous repose, and excite me to suffer a thousand deaths rather than offend Thee by satisfying my sensuality ; and this is the resolution I form by the help of thy holy grace.

O illustrious Penitent ! at thy last hour thou didst ask pardon of thy body for having treated it with such rigour ; do not permit that, through a false tenderness, I may neglect to mortify mine during this life, lest at the hour of death I regret in vain the cares I have bestowed on it. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

FOURTH DAY.

On St. Francis' Patience.

When St. Francis beheld for the first time the vision of Jesus crucified, he heard Him say these

words : "If thou wilt come after me, deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow me." No sooner had he heard this, than he embraced the cross with heroic patience, and throughout the whole of the perfect life he undertook to lead, he had many occasions of practising it in the highest degree. His austerities having rendered him pale and languid, people thought he had lost the use of his reason, and made him an object of mockery ; they assailed him with cries and insults, and even went so far as to cast mud and stones at him ; but he passed along as though he did not perceive it. He supported with the same equanimity the ill-treatment of his father, of robbers, of the Saracens, and even of the demons. He was afflicted with many severe pains and ailments ; and, particularly during the latter years of his life, he suffered so much that he appeared almost like a skeleton. Nevertheless he looked upon these sufferings as so many gifts of God.

PRAYER.

O my Saviour ! when will I also find as much joy in pains and sufferings, as in sweetness and consolations ? Ah ! I have only to think of Thy bitter passion in order to do so. Then I will adore and love in all things Thy Divine Will. I ask it of Thee with the profoundest humility of heart ; I am confident Thou wilt grant it to me, and from this moment I thank Thee for all the afflictions it may please Thee to send me. Alas ! wert Thou to send me a thousand times greater ones, they would never be in proportion to my sins.

O Glorious St. Francis ! may thy patience sustain me, and convince me of that great truth thou didst love to teach ; that the perfect happiness and true glory of those who serve God consist in suffering

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willingly for His love. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

FIFTH DAY.

On St. Francis' love of God.

St. Francis was so inflamed with divine love, that he appeared like a Seraph, and received the title of Seraphic. In his youth he formed the sublime resolution of never refusing anything asked of him for the love of God. It was this love which stripped him of all he possessed ; it was this love which carried him three times into the midst of the infidels, that he might shed his blood for the glory of God ; this love was the principle of all his labours for the salvation of his neighbour ; for he believed it impossible to be loved by God, unless he did all in his power to save the souls purchased with the Blood of Jesus Christ. At the very mention of the love of God, St. Francis burned with a celestial fire, and this was often the cause of his extraordinary languors and ecstasies. In fine, as St. Francis of Sales remarked, Our Holy Father's death was caused by the ardour of divine love.

PRAYER.

O my God ! it was not without reason that St. Bonaventure compared St. Francis to a burning coal, all consumed with the fire of Thy love. What a source of shame for me, that while creatures served our holy Father as steps by which to ascend to Thee, they are for me a constant occasion of offending Thy Infinite Majesty, and of neglecting Thy service ! Pardon me, O Lord ! and grant me but a spark of that holy fire which consumed Thy servant, that, like him, I may no longer have any desire but to

please Thee, and consecrate myself wholly to the glory of Thy holy name. O Seraph of love, let thy example draw all my inclinations towards that abyss of goodness, that so henceforward I may find no pain but in what offends God, no consolation but in labouring and suffering for His love. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

SIXTH DAY.

St. Francis' Charity for his Neighbour.

Had any one been able to penetrate into the heart of St. Francis, he would have discovered therein a wonderful combination of gentleness and love for his neighbour. In his youth he stripped himself of his garments to clothe a poor soldier, and on other occasions he divided them that he might give part to the needy. To serve those suffering from leprosy was one of his favourite occupations ; in the sufferings of others he beheld those which Jesus Christ endured for our sake, and whenever he cast his eyes upon a poor person, his heart was moved to compassion. But the salvation of souls was the principal object of his charity ; he desired, were it possible, to convert and sanctify all the nations of the earth ; for that end he never ceased to labour and pray ; not content with employing his disciples in the work, he laboured in person for the salvation of souls, traversing provinces and kingdoms ; and the vineyard of the Lord, watered with his sweat, produced wonderful fruits of grace, of which not the least was the Third Order.

PRAYER.

O my Jesus ! how far am I from imitating those bright examples of Christian charity ? How often

does not self-love make me forget my duties towards others ! O Lord, I sincerely repent of my hard-heartedness ; henceforward I will look upon each of my brethren as a second self ; and as sin is the greatest misfortune which can befall them, I beseech Thee, O my God, to afflict me as Thou pleasest, but deign to preserve them from so great an evil.

And do Thou, O holy and compassionate Father, obtain for me a heart like thine, with which I may consider my neighbour, not according to the dictates of self-love, but according to those of that tender charity which binds me to him in the profession of the same Faith, and in the imitation of the life, and the practice of the teachings of our Divine Lord. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

SEVENTH DAY.

St. Francis' devotion to the Mysteries of Our Lord's Life.

St. Francis prepared for the principal feasts by observing long Lents, during which he not only fasted, but also passed his time in fervent meditations and other exercises of solid piety. He had a great devotion to our Lord's Nativity, and celebrated it in so tender and touching a manner, that all were moved to an extraordinary degree. In order to recompense his servant, our Lord deigned to repose under the form of an infant, in the crib St. Francis had prepared. The holy patriarch shed bitter tears when he thought of the passion of Our Saviour ; it was at the same time his model, his book, and the ordinary subject of his discourses. It was impossible to see him communicate without being penetrated by devotion, and the ineffable sweetness he experienced therein often raised him into ecstasy.

PRAYER.

O Sweet Jesus ! Thy mysteries were a heavenly mine, from which St. Francis drew forth immense treasures of sanctity ; and I think I honour them very much when I perform languidly some exterior exercises of piety, with a mind filled with a thousand vanities. Ah ! teach me Thyself, O Lord, what Thou wilt I should do. I adore and love Thee in Thy life, and passion, and death ; deign to show me Thy ways and my duties.

And thou St. Francis, perfect model of devotion, aid me to praise God, not only with my lips, but also with my heart, by my actions and my whole life. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

EIGHTH DAY.

On the Sacred Stigmata of St. Francis.

The life of St. Francis had many points of resemblance to that of Our Divine Lord ; but the impression of the Wounds of Jesus on the body of His holy servant was the perfection and seal of that divine conformity. Our Saviour appeared to him under the form of a bright Seraph crucified ; and after having wounded his heart with love by the contemplation of his ravishing beauty, and by mysterious words of ineffable sweetness, he wounded the very body of His servant ; imprinting in his hands and feet and side a lifelike image of the wounds He had received for the salvation of the world. This was accompanied by an excessive anguish, which the holy patriarch endured during the two years it pleased God to spare him to manifest to the eyes of men the precious marks of our redemption.

PRAYER.

Who, O Lord, can praise Thee worthily for so admirable a work ? Thou didst desire that the wounds of Thy servant, recalling Thine own, should excite us to render Thee love for the inestimable benefit of Thy bitter passion : be Thou for ever blessed for this mark of Thy Fatherly care ! Deign, O God, to accomplish the desire with which the sight of those holy wounds inspire me ; make me die to the world and to myself, that I may live solely for Thee.

O Blessed Father ! increase, by the ardours of thy love, the sentiments which thy holy wounds arouse within me ; that while saluting them with profound respect, I may understand the words they whisper to me : " Love tenderly that God, who by an excess of goodness has deigned to suffer and die for the love of thee." Three Our Fathers, &c., as above.

NINTH DAY.

On the happy death of St. Francis.

The death of St. Francis was one of the most touching spectacles the world has ever seen. At his last hour, remembering the nakedness of our Saviour on the cross, he stretched himself naked on the earth in order to imitate Him. The Superior offered him a habit, saying that he lent it to him as an alms ; and St. Francis, rejoicing to be faithful unto death to his dear poverty, received it with thanksgiving. He asked them to read aloud the history of the passion according to St. John ; then he recited the 141st Psalm, and while reciting the last verse : " Lead my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name : the just wait for me until thou reward me," he rendered his soul sweetly to God.

That holy soul was seen to mount to eternal glory, like a lovely star ascending the heavens ; his body remained on earth, no longer thin and worn, but youthful and marvellously white, made beautiful by the stigmata received from his Lord.

PRAYER.

O my Jesus ! how precious is the death of Thy Saints ! St. Francis, at its approach, expressed by fervent thanksgivings the excess of his joy, and called upon his Brothers to aid him in singing Thy praises. Grant me the grace to lead a life similiar in some degree to his, that, like him, I may die the death of the Saints. O Holy Father, ask this favour for thy unworthy child. Make me humble and mortified, patient and charitable ; and when my last hour comes, do thou stand near and aid me, and lead me to the feet of thy Lord and mine. Amen. Three Our Fathers, &c.

THE ROSARY OF THE SEVEN JOYS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

This devotion was begun about the year 1422 by a Franciscan novice of the Observance, and on that account is frequently called the Franciscan crown. It was propagated by St. Bernardine of Siena, Blessed Gabriel, and others ; and the Holy See has granted a plenary indulgence to the Members of the Cord each time they recite it in the state of grace. Confession and Communion are not required.

It may be said on the ordinary beads of five decades, or, indeed, without any beads at all ; but it is better if possible to recite it on beads of seven decades made specially for that purpose. These beads do not necessarily require to be blessed.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and one Glory

be, &c., are to be recited while meditating on each of the following mysteries :—

- 1st joy, The Annunciation.
- 2d „ The Visitation of St. Elizabeth.
- 3d „ The Birth of Our Lord.
- 4th „ The Adoration of Jesus by the Wise Men.
- 5th „ The Finding in the Temple.
- 6th „ The Apparition of Jesus to His Holy Mother on the morning of His Resurrection.
- 7th „ The Assumption and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin in Heaven.

Then two Hail Marys are recited to complete the number of seventy-two, in honour of the seventy-two years which our Lady is said to have passed on earth, and finally an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory are said for the Sovereign Pontiff.

CHAPTER XI.

PLAN OF A RULE OF LIFE AND MONTHLY RETREAT.

THE Spirit of God is a spirit of order and peace, directly opposed to the spirit of the world, which loves excitement and seeks after novelty. When, therefore, any one, following the guidance of the Holy Ghost, endeavours to lead a pious life, he immediately begins to arrange his daily actions according to a certain method or rule. It is because he has learnt that this life is the season for sowing, eternity, for reaping; that each moment of his transitory existence on earth is precious indeed, because upon it depends the abundance of the

eternal harvest which is fast approaching. He desires, therefore, to turn every instant of it to profit ; and lest even one should pass away without fruit, he endeavours to assign to each its share of labour, its portion of seed to be cast into the ground, that he may thus prepare for himself a sweeter repose and a more abundant reward hereafter. Nor does he shrink from the effort this requires, for he gladly counts himself among those of whom the Psalmist says that "going on their way they indeed went, and wept, scattering their seed ; but returning they shall come with joyfulness, bringing their sheaves with them."

His first care, therefore, is to adopt a *Rule of life* ; to fix, as nearly as circumstances will allow, the series of actions which fill each day. If it is impossible to allot to each hour its own occupations, he will at least try to construct the *frame-work*, if I may so express myself, of his daily life, leaving to circumstances the task of filling it up. Thus he will determine the time and number of his daily prayers and spiritual exercises, the order of his principal actions and duties, the portion of time to be given to recreation and repose, &c. After carefully drawing up his rule of life, he will submit it to the judgment of his Director, and having obtained his approbation, will try to observe it with exactitude, but without constraint, in a spirit of obedience. By this means he will perform all his actions through a purer motive and with greater perfection. Besides these advantages, the adoption of a rule of life is an excellent remedy for two mental affections most frequent at the present day, namely, restless agitation and melancholy.

In order that the members of the Confraternity may be better able to draw up their rule of life, we give here a plan which may serve as a model, but

which each one can modify to suit the circumstances of his duties and position, selecting from it the practices he can observe regularly, and without effort.

1. *The Morning*.—As soon as you awake, raise your heart to God, make the sign of the cross, and say: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." Have a fixed time for rising, and as soon as it comes say: "All for Thee, O Lord," and rise promptly, even if it cost an effort; offering this little act of mortification to God as the first-fruits of the day. While dressing, entertain yourself with pious thoughts, or with the subject of your meditation, or say some vocal prayers to keep yourself recollected. Then kneel down, and, after placing yourself in the presence of God, recite devoutly your morning prayers, concluding with a recommendation of yourself to the Blessed Virgin, St. Francis, and your Angel Guardian. Do not forget to form the intention of gaining all the indulgences you can for yourself, or for the souls in Purgatory.

Then endeavour to foresee the various circumstances in which you may be placed during the day, the means of avoiding sin, and the occasions of practising virtue. If you have not much time, the above acts may be made very briefly, but with great fervour.

This is the best time to make a meditation, which should be carefully prepared the preceding evening, and ought to occupy your thoughts from the moment you awake. But should you be unable to meditate, try to read very slowly a chapter of the "Imitation of Christ," or of some spiritual book, pausing from time to time to reflect on what you read and form some practical resolutions for the amendment of your life. This will not only be a good substitute for a meditation, but will also insensibly prepare

your mind to meditate with facility and profit, when circumstances admit of it.

2. *Holy Mass*.—Never miss an opportunity of hearing Holy Mass ; and if you can do so every day, you will find it an abundant source of grace and blessing. Besides, it is most fitting that the members of a confraternity instituted in honour of Christ's Passion should be assiduous in assisting at Holy Mass, which is the mystical representation of the death of Our Lord, and produces in the souls of those who assist at it devoutly the fruits of reconciliation and sanctification it merited for the whole world when first offered on Calvary.

In case of necessity you might recite your morning prayers, and make your meditation or spiritual reading while assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, being careful to unite your intention to that of the priest, at the beginning of Mass, at the Offertory, the Consecration and Communion.

When you have not the happiness of communicating sacramentally, you should try to do so at least spiritually, by making (1) an act of faith in the Real Presence, (2) of humility and contrition, (3) of love and desire. (4) You can then imagine you receive Our Lord really, and produce acts similar to those you make when communicating sacramentally. This practice is most salutary, and serves as a remote preparation for communicating devoutly.

3. *Daily Duties*.—As your sanctification depends chiefly on the worthy performance of your daily duties, you should study to accomplish them with exactitude and an interior spirit. Whatever your position in society, you must not imagine yourself exempt from the obligation of labour imposed on all the children of Adam. You should therefore fly idleness, and take care that the precious moments of this life do not slip away in vain amusements,

dreamy reveries, useless reading, indolence, or sensuality. Dispose of your time in such a way, that, after allotting a reasonable portion to recreation and meals, the rest may be divided between the duties of your social position, prayer and works of charity.

If divine providence has placed you in an humble and laborious position, remember that a great number of Saints, particularly among the children of St. Francis, have renounced an exalted station for a poor and lowly life, in order to labour with greater security to sanctify their souls ; since the possession of dignities and wealth is always attended with danger to salvation. Keep before your eyes the example of Jesus Christ, who chose an humble and laborious condition for Himself, His holy Mother and St. Joseph, and for nearly thirty years earned His bread in the sweat of His brow.

Perform all your duties with great care and diligence, whether they are for your own temporal advantage or for that of others ; doing them all in order to please God whose Eye is ever upon you, and not to please or gain the esteem of men.

Hence cultivate *the interior spirit*, which is an easy means of sanctifying the most common actions. It consists, (1) in commencing them with a pure intention, and offering them for the greater glory of God ; (2) in doing them in the presence of God, or while entertaining some pious thoughts, or at least lifting up your heart to God from time to time by short but fervent ejaculatory prayers. This interior spirit is a short and secure path to perfection.

4. *Meals*.—Always recite with attention the prayers before and after meals, thus sanctifying these material actions by offering them to God. Be moderate at table, both in the quality and quantity of your food, and endeavour to practise some slight

mortifications unobserved by others ; for example, eating cheerfully without remark food which is not prepared as you wish, dispensing with seasoning or fruit for which you have a predilection, taking *a little* less than you feel inclined to do, and so forth. These small acts of self-denial constitute an excellent manner of practising that exterior mortification without which the interior mortification of the passions is difficult or almost impossible, and is at the same time most meritorious before God.

5. *Good Works.*—Be foremost in every good work, especially those for the instruction of children and the relief of the poor. Endeavour to assist at sermons and the public offices of the Church, and do all in your power to promote the pious associations established in your parish. Choose your companions, if you can, among the pious and virtuous persons of your neighbourhood. Avoid worldly reunions and pleasures, which would soon give you a distaste for spiritual things and insensibly lead you far from God. Let your conversation be cheerful, edifying and free from raillery, contention, or whatever might wound charity, being ready to yield in many trifling matters rather than engage yourself in a dispute, which is a very good means of living in peace with others.

6. *In the Evening.*—Endeavour to assist at Rosary or Benediction, or at least pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Had you a very dear friend who dwelt not far off, you would hardly allow a day to pass without visiting him, were it only for a few moments, especially if you knew that he looked forward eagerly to your coming. Now you have no friend so dear and so worthy of your love as Jesus Christ, nor one who so ardently expects your visits, and it is on that account He remains day and night in the tabernacle, ready to repay you with abundant

graces. You should therefore try to present yourself before Him, to thank Him for the favours received, and beg pardon for the faults committed during the day, and ask His blessing before retiring to rest.

When reciting your night prayers make a careful examination of conscience, recalling to your mind the events of the day, and exciting yourself to a hearty sorrow for your faults and a firm purpose of amendment. It is also well to impose on yourself some slight penance in expiation of them. Do not forget to recite the prayers in honour of the Wounds of Our Lord and St. Francis, and if alone, do so with outstretched arms according to the custom of the Order.

You would do well to employ a quarter of an hour each evening in reading the life of a Saint or some edifying book. Those who make a meditation in the morning, should read it over carefully after evening prayers and fix the points in their memory, determining the resolutions they intend to draw from it.

Having commended yourself to God, retire to rest as modestly as though our Lord Himself were visibly present, making the sign of the cross and saying the indulgenced prayer :

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

Then occupy your mind with some pious thought until you fall asleep. If during the night you should be unable to sleep, lift up your heart to God, or recite some vocal prayers.

7. *The Sacraments*.—Make an examination every week for a quarter of an hour as to how you observe

your rule of life, and see whether your fervour diminishes, taking measures afterwards to renew or maintain it. This examen might form part of your preparation for Confession, if, as is strongly recommended, you approach the Holy Sacraments weekly. You could thus better acquaint your Director with your spiritual state. Make each confession as though it were the last of your life, endeavouring particularly to conceive a sincere sorrow for your sins ; it is more important than a minute search for every fault you have committed.

Choose a Director who is at the same time pious and learned, gentle and firm, and to whom you can speak openly ; and having made your choice, do not change easily, but abandon yourself to his guidance, considering in him only the minister and representative of Jesus Christ. Leave it to him to fix the frequency of your Communions, directing your whole attention to preparing yourself well to profit of them. Above all turn to account the time of thanksgiving after Communion, which is perhaps the most precious of your whole life, for you will never find Our Lord more favourably disposed to grant your petitions than when He dwells corporally within you. Ask particularly for an increase of His love, a great devotion to His sacred passion, and the grace of final perseverance.

8. *Monthly Retreat*.—This exercise consists in choosing one day each month, for example that which precedes the monthly meeting, in order to examine carefully how you have fulfilled your duties during the month which has just ended, and to see how you intend to pass the one which is just beginning, and thus prepare for a happy death. There are few exercises more proper to aid us to advance perseveringly in virtue than this one when it is made with regularity and fervour. You may

make it according to the following method without interrupting your ordinary occupations :—

1st. On the previous evening practise some light mortification at supper. Recite the *Veni Creator* (page 30) to obtain the aid of the Holy Ghost ; prepare your meditation for the next morning, which should be on the end for which you were created, on one of the four last things, or on one of your principal obligations. Retire to rest with great recollection, occupying your thoughts with the retreat.

2d. On awaking in the morning imagine that on this day you have to give an account to God of all your actions ; banish as much as possible all other thoughts ; recite your prayers and make your meditation with as much care as though it were for the last time ;—assist if you can at Holy Mass ;—pass the day in as recollected a manner as possible, speaking no more than is necessary, and make frequent use of ejaculatory prayers.

3d. Make in the course of the day a serious examen of your spiritual state ; invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost, read your rule of life and see how you observe it ; see what there may be in your heart which is displeasing to God, and make a firm resolution to correct it.

4th. In the evening go to the church and approach the tribunal of penance, taking care to inform your Director how you stand with Almighty God and what resolutions you have made. Then employ half an hour in making the following preparation for death. Retire to a place where you are perfectly tranquil, and, forgetting everything else, ask yourself these questions : What is death ?—Am I certain to die ?—When shall I die ? Where and how shall I die ?—How shall I wish to have lived when I come to die ?—Am I ready to die ?—Meditate a while on each of these questions and make

resolutions, or confirm yourself in those made previously.

5th. Retire to rest in profound recollection as though you were never to rise again, and communicate next morning as if for the last time in your life.

HYMNS.

No. 1.—OH COME AND MOURN.

OH come and mourn with me awhile,
See Mary calls us to her side ;
Oh come and let us mourn with her ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

Have we no tears to shed for Him,
While soldiers scoff and Jews deride ?
Ah ! look how patiently He hangs ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

How fast His Hands and Feet are nailed ;
His blessed Tongue with thirst is tied,
His failing Eyes are blind with blood ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

His Mother cannot reach His face ;
She stands in helplessness beside ;
Her heart is martyred with her Son's ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

Seven times He spoke, seven words of love,
And three long hours His silence cried
For mercy on the souls of men ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

What was Thy crime, my dearest Lord ?
By earth, by heaven, Thou hast been tried,
And guilty found of too much love ;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

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No. 2.—FOUND GUILTY.

FOUND guilty of excess of love,
 It was Thine own sweet will that tied
 Thee tighter far than helpless nails ;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

Death came, and Jesus meekly bowed ;
 His failing eyes He strove to guide
 With mindful love to Mary's face ;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

Oh break, oh break, hard heart of mine,
 Thy weak self-love and guilty pride
 His Pilate and His Judas were ;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

Come, take thy stand beneath the Cross,
 And let the Blood from out His side
 Fall gently on thee drop by drop ;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

A broken heart, a fount of tears,
 Ask, and they will not be denied !
 A broken heart love's cradle is ;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified !

O love of God ! O sin of man !
 In this dread act your sin is tried ;
 And victory remains with love,
 For He, our Love, is crucified !

No. 3.—LITANY OF THE PASSION.

By the blood that flowed from Thee
 In Thy bitter agony.
 By the scourge so meekly borne,
 By Thy purple robe of scorn,—
 Jesu, Saviour, hear our cry !
 Thou wert suffering once as we ;
 Hear the loving Litany
 We Thy children sing to Thee.

By the thorns that crowned Thy head,
By Thy sceptre of a reed,
By Thy footstep faint and slow,
Weighed beneath Thy cross of woe,—
Jesu, Saviour, hear our cry, &c.

By the nails and pointed spear,
By Thy people's cruel jeer,
By Thy dying prayer which rose
Begging mercy for Thy foes,—
Jesu, Saviour, hear our cry, &c.

By the darkness thick as night,
Blotting out the sun from sight ;
By the cry with which in death
Thou didst yield Thy parting breath,—
Jesu, Saviour, hear our cry, &c.

By Thy weeping mother's woe,
By the sword that pierced her through,
When in anguish standing by,
On the cross she saw Thee die,—
Jesu, Saviour, hear our cry, &c.

No. 4—ST. FRANCIS.

LET Alverna's holy mountain
That high mystery proclaim,
Of the signs of life eternal
Which on blessed Francis came ;
While he sobbed, and while he sighed,
Grieving for the crucified.

There, within a lowly cavern,
Far from all the world withdrawn,
As the Saint his watch was keeping,
With incessant scourgings torn,
Ever musing more and more
On the wounds that Jesus bore ;

As he prayed in cold and hunger ;
As he poured his glowing tears ;
In his fervent spirit mounting
Far above terrestrial spheres,
Every earthly thing forgot
In his Saviour's bitter lot ;—

Lo to him, in form seraphic,
Borne upon a cross on high,
Six irradiant wings expanding
Came the King of glory nigh, !
Gazing on him with a face
Of benignity and grace.

He saw that tender glance returning,
Saw th' Incarnate Light of Light ;
Saw his gracious meek Redeemer,
Robed in glory infinite ;
Drank the words that from Him fell,—
Words divine, unspeakable !

Straightway all the sacred summit
Kindles like a flaming pyre ;
Holy Francis sinks enraptured
Fainting with ecstatic fire ;
And upon his flesh appear
Christ's immortal stigmata !

Honour to the high Redeemer,
Who for us in torments died,
In whose image blessed Francis
Suffered and was sanctified,
Counting everything but loss
For the glory of the Cross.

The following Hymns, from the gifted pen of the Rev. James Connolly, of Kentish Town, have, by the kind permission of the author, been extracted from the charming collection just published by him. (London : Washbourne.)

No. 5.—THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

ABOVE this world of tears and sighs,
I raise, O God, my soul ;
And gaze on Thee beyond those skies
Where shining planets roll.
I see around Thy throne divine
The saints in bright array,
And ask how came they to be Thine,
And whence, blest souls, are they ?

Thou tellest me they meekly bore
Privation, pain, and loss,
And cheerfully they travelled o'er
The pathway of the Cross.
And thus, from many griefs and pains,
Have come to realms of light ;
And in Thy Blood have washed from stains
Those robes that look so white.

And now away from toil and strife,
From sin and sinners' ways ;
From all the emptiness of life,
They live the endless days.
By Thee redeemed, by Thee embraced,
With Thee for ever blessed ;
Their Saviour's joy they see and taste,
And on His bosom rest.

O precious Blood in Jesu's veins !
All wretched as I am,
I ask Thee cleanse my soul from stains,
O world-redeeming Lamb.

O God of earth, by heaven adored,
Before Thy mercy-seat,
I ask that o'er my soul be poured
This saving balm and sweet.

And though I suffer here below,
And tread the thorny way,
Thy Blood will make me white as snow,
And wash my sins away.
And as my soul with ardour glows,
To come to where Thou art,
My hope is in the Blood that flows
From Thy most Sacred Heart.

No. 6.—THE FIVE WOUNDS.

WHAT are those wounds, so deep, so red,
From which, dear Lord, Thy Blood was shed
In priceless streams and sweet?
And who could do so base a sin
As make those cruel gashes in
Thy hands and side and feet?

They are the pledges of Thy love,
Which spent itself in death to prove
How dear we are to Thee;
They are the tokens of our guilt—
Those wounds we made, Thy Blood we spilt,
And nailed Thee to the tree.

Hail, holy wounds! Hail, founts of light!
Within whose splendours heavenly bright,
The saints and angels bask;
Hail, founts of life! whence graces flow,
Which Thou dost freely, Lord, bestow
On all who humbly ask.

Though sad bereavements tear my heart,
Though sin and sorrow leave their smart,
And keen remorse I feel,
I'll touch, dear Lord, Thy bleeding palm,—
Thy holy hands distil a balm
My deepest wounds to heal.

When bitter memories of the past
Their chilling shadows o'er me cast,
And hope gives way to fears,
Thy wounded feet I'll clasp and kiss,
And there, like Mary, taste the bliss
Of penitential tears.

When lightnings flash and thunders roll,
And terror strikes my inmost soul
At Heaven's angry form,
I'll fly, O Jesus, to Thy side,
And seek, within its wound so wide,
A shelter from the storm.

No. 7.—CALVARY.

THY life, O Lord, is ebbing fast,
Thy eyes are growing dim at last,
How near to death Thou art ;
I hear Thee heave one heavy sigh—
It is the last, the loudest cry,
That broke Thy Sacred Heart.

The scene—the dreadful scene is o'er,
The wicked men can do no more,
Thy head is on Thy breast ;
The thorns, the nails, Thou dost not fear,
The cruel scoff, the bitter jeer,
Thy Heart is now at rest.

Thy voice that made the devils flee,
That waked the dead and calmed the sea,
 Itself in death is hushed ;
But oh ! we have this comfort sweet,
Our foes lie prostrate at Thy feet,
 The serpent's head is crushed.

Thy corpse is hanging on the tree,
While mocking crowds in impious glee
 The murderous act applaud ;
But quivering earth and darkened skies,
The crumbling rocks, the dead that rise,
 Proclaim Thee to be God.

Yes, Jesus ! bruised and smeared with blood,
And fastened to the dripping wood,
 To me Thou art the same,
As throned on Thabor's shining mount,
Or in the heavens, of bliss the Fount,
 In glory and in shame.

Oh may Thy last, Thy piercing cry—
The Blood that pleaded loud on high
 For me be not in vain !
Oh make me treat the world as dross,
And glory only in the Cross
 On which Thou wouldst be slain !

NO. 8.—THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

UPON my forehead I will sign
 The Holy Cross of Christ,
And pray that not a thought of mine
 To sin may be enticed.

Upon my lips I'll sign it too,
 And my dear Lord beseech
To grant me grace, that chaste and true
 And kind may be my speech.

I'll sign it also on my heart,
That Jesus there may reign,
And never let me from Him part
By sinning e'er again.

The Cross will break the tempter's pride,
His wicked darts repel ;
The sign of Jesus crucified
Will crush the strength of Hell.

The Cross for me has heavenly charms,
For Christ on it was laid ;
Oh may I live beneath its arms,
And die beneath its shade.

APPENDIX.

BESIDES the advantages mentioned at page 12, the members of the Arch-Confraternity enjoy the special protection of the Seraphic Father St. Francis, and have the inestimable happiness of being delivered from the pains of purgatory on the anniversary of his death, the 4th of October.

This privilege was revealed by St. Francis after his death in the following terms :—"When I was praying on Mount Alverna, and was completely absorbed in the meditation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, He appeared to me, and impressed on my body the Sacred Stigmata which I bear, and said : 'I have given you the Stigmata, the marks of My Passion, in order that you may be My standard-bearer. And as, on the day of My death, I descended into Limbo, and, by virtue of My Five Wounds, released all the souls detained there, and led them in triumph into Heaven ; so you also, after you leave the earth, shall have the power to descend into purgatory every year on the anniversary of your death, and by virtue of your Stigmata deliver the souls of your brethren of the three Orders who may be detained there, *and even of all others who have had during life a great devotion towards you,* and lead them with you into My Kingdom.' " *

* Bartholomew of Pisa. Lib. Conform. 31 ; Fioretti, Fifth Consideration on the Sacred Stigmata.

The Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

S E R M O N

**PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE FRANCISCAN
FATHERS, STRATFORD, LONDON, E., ON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1877.**

BY

THE REV. JAMES CONNOLLY.

SERMON.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. . . . From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body” (Gal. vi. 14, 17).

THESE words were dictated by a fervent, generous, magnanimous love of Christ crucified. They are the words of one who was enamoured of the Cross, who had one lofty overmastering desire, one deep, holy, indomitable passion,—to see it subdue and triumph over the world. They are the words of an intrepid lover of the Cross, uttered with a boldness and independence which men might regard as hard-faced presumption. Although St. Paul knew well the hostility he would arouse and encounter; though he knew he would have the worldly, the sensual, and the time-serving arrayed against him; though he knew his zeal would be stigmatised as religious frenzy, and his utterances regarded as the senseless extravagances of a distempered mind, yet he clings to the Cross and glories in the Cross. Yea, he repudiates every other source of glory, as he disdains all other knowledge save that of Christ crucified. And, as if desiring to be branded with the

mark of Christ crucified, as a slave with the mark of his master, that all men might recognise him as the Apostle of Jesus of Nazareth, he exclaims, with all the frankness and manliness and earnestness of his nature, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And why speak of the Cross and Christ crucified on such a solemnity as this, when everything around us betokens gladness and joy? It is because the words of the great Apostle apply, in their fullest and their most literal sense, to the Patron of this Church, in whose honour this altar is dedicated to-day. When I look at all this chaste and refined art around me, one central figure rivets my thoughts and defines my subject. It vividly brings before me one of the greatest of the sons of men; one whose glory has travelled in the path of the sun; one whose sweetness, meekness, gentleness, wondrous love of poverty, extraordinary self-denial, apostolic love of souls, whose exquisite, ecstatic, and seraphic love of Jesus have been for more than six centuries the theme of the painter and the poet, the historian and the preacher, in every part of the Catholic Unity—the wondrous and renowned St. Francis of Assisi. And the words I have quoted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians would seem not only to sketch the character and describe the life of St. Francis, but also to point to those very gifts which mark him out amongst even the greatest of the Saints of God.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Is there one amongst us who does not glory in the Cross? Have we not gloried in it since we were first taught to make it in early childhood? since we first signed it upon ourselves in the dark hours of trouble, danger, and temptation? Ay, we would be unworthy of our

calling—all of us, priests and people—if we did not glory in it. Yes, thank God, we all love the Cross, the emblem of our Master, the emblem of our Faith. We seize it as our weapon, we embrace it as our joy. We glory in it; for it reveals to us the deepest secrets of our Redeemer's love. But the Cross presents itself in different aspects to different minds, according to the point of view from which they regard it. To one it is the emblem of sorrow for sin. Such it was to Magdalene. The sight of it always reminded her of that hour of her distracted grief, when, as she clasped the Cross, her penitential tears mingled with the Precious Blood of Jesus. To another it is the emblem of joy. So it seemed to St. Andrew, as, beholding at a distance the cross on which he was to die, he exclaimed, "Hail, precious Cross, that hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs, as with rich jewels. I come to thee exulting and glad." To another it is the type of those humiliations through which, by the designs of God, we have to pass before we reach our eternal rest. Thus St. John of the Cross looked upon it. Amidst his hard and heavy trials, amidst the cruel persecutions he had to endure from his own brethren, who condemned him to prison as a rebel against his Order and an apostate from his vows, his pains were allayed and his heart comforted by the sight of the Cross. That holy sign pointed out to him the royal road of suffering along which he was to travel in the company of his Redeemer, to reach his true, his everlasting home. It suggested to him these remarkable words: "Persecutions are the means to enter into the depth, or attain to the knowledge, of the mystery of the Cross, a necessary condition for comprehending the depth of the wisdom of God and of His love." The Apostle St. Paul looked

upon the Cross as the emblem of triumph. Like a soldier proud of the banner of his sovereign, he would cheerfully walk the world over that he might plant it everywhere. It was his noblest ambition to see the Cross float over every fortress, glitter on every temple, wave over every housetop. Animated with fiery zeal, he would seem to scorn danger, laugh at impossibilities, and despise death in its grimmest form, if he could only make men know Christ crucified. As the sun is to us the source of light, so to him was the Cross the source of his glory. Hence his indomitable courage, his long wanderings by land, his perilous voyages by sea; never intimidated, never desponding. Hence he goes forth, the soldier-Apostle, battling with the very elements, that he may spread abroad the knowledge of the Cross, and establish the sovereignty of his Lord in every land and in every heart. Listen to the words addressed by him from his prison to the people of Colossa: "Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the Cross. And despoiling principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself" (Coloss. ii. 14, 15).

Now to St. Francis the Cross revealed the love of Jesus crucified. It was to him the visible, tangible expression of the Divine charity of the Sacred Heart. It was to him the type of love made manifest by the agonies and death of the Son of God. And therefore the love of St. Francis for the Cross was an absorbing love. Jesus crucified was ever in his thoughts, ever on his lips, ever in his heart. St. Paul, amidst his many labours and trials, could console himself by looking upwards to his crown sparkling in the sky which the just

Judge would one day place upon his brow. Cheered, invigorated by the majestic hope of a future reward, he exclaims : " For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us " (Rom. viii. 18). But St. Francis was so rapt in the contemplation of his suffering Lord that he could not tear himself away from the Cross ; as if he could not leave the sorrows of Calvary even to glance at the glories of Thabor. So ardent, so intense his love for Christ crucified, that the Church, borrowing a word from heaven, names it " Seraphic." And the more fully to understand the meaning of this designation, let us consider that there are nine choirs of angels around the throne of God, grouped in three grand hierarchies, differing in beauty and in brightness as " star differeth from star in glory " (1 Cor. xv. 41), and each with its own resplendent excellence, as amongst the Saints of God each has his own characteristic virtue. But first of all in rank are the Seraphim. Possessing the virtues of the inferior angels in a higher degree, they surpass them all in the love of God. They come nearer to the Divine nature, which is Love itself—" for God is Charity " (1 John iv. 8). It is because their love for God is so active, so ardent, so penetrating, that they are termed *Seraphim*, which word, in the Hebrew, means *burning*. As the sparks from a furnace fly upwards, so are they ever carried up above all other things, and above themselves, to the ravishing love of God. The Angels are the messengers of God ; the Dominations are filled with zeal for the glory of His Divine Sovereignty, that all things may be subjected to Its Almighty sway ; the Thrones are the guardians of the Judgments of God, bound by sweet necessity to accept, adore, and justify His

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Holy Will ; the Cherubim are dazzling with the supernatural knowledge of things divine, reflecting the effulgence of the Uncreated Wisdom : but the Seraphim are, so to say, literally on fire with the love of God, wrapped round and round in the flames of Divine Charity.

As the love of the Seraph for God, such was the love of St. Francis for Jesus crucified. And hence he loved the Cross as the sweetest, tenderest, most enrapturing memorial of suffering and redeeming love.

Moreover, St. Francis' love for our Blessed Lord was, if I might say so, an agonising love. His sympathy and commiseration for Christ crucified was such that he might be said to suffer in his members and in his soul as Jesus did in His Heart and Flesh. The life of St. Francis was a perpetual Passion. The garden round the little Church of St. Mary of the Angels was his Gethsemani, and Mount Alverno his Calvary. It seemed as if he could not satisfy his love for his crucified Master till he had done for Jesus what Jesus had done for him : as if he must transfer to himself all the sufferings of our Redeemer ; as if his thirst for suffering could only be slaked by drinking of the Cup of the Passion, and his desire to suffer could only be satisfied by his being baptized with the baptism of Jesus. As if he would say : " Come down, O Lord, from Thy Cross, and let me be stretched upon it in Thy stead. Let the nails be drawn out of Thy hands and feet and hammered into mine. Let the thorn-Crown be gently lifted off Thy brow and pressed deep into my temples. Let *my* nerves quiver, and *my* muscles start, and *my* blood flow, and the fever burn in *my* bones. Cruel, cruel murderers, spare *Jesus*, my Life, my Love, my God, but vent all your rage, heap all your torments, upon *me*."

There is an extraordinary expression recorded of St. Francis of Sales. It is said of him that he wished to be able to love our Lord with the intensity of that love with which God loves Himself. Perhaps he derived that noble thought from the contemplation of the life of his great namesake, for it would seem as if St. Francis of Assisi desired to have his own heart taken out of his breast, and the Heart of Jesus placed therein, that he might suffer, if possible, with all the intensity of our Lord's suffering. Hence his sobs and moanings during the long, long nights spent in the bleak solitude of Alverno ; hence his cries of anguish that resounded through the silent groves and along the lonely roads, as he thought of the sins, the coldness and indifference and ingratitude of men towards Jesus crucified through love of us.

And as St. Francis gloried in the Cross of our Lord, so has the glory of the Cross fallen on him and his. Prince and peasant, priests and people, love him, reverence him, invoke him. Even in his lifetime he received greater honours than were ever paid to the kings and nobles of the earth ; and time has not dimmed the lustre of his great name, no more than it dims the lustre of the stars. Young and old, men and women, the rapt recluse in his cloister, and the man of business in the world—Popes, even, and monarchs—have regarded it as a high privilege, a sacred honour, to bear his holy habit and his rough cord ; to be enlisted in his ranks, enrolled under his banner, to cherish him as their patron, and look up to him as their example ; glad, yea proud, to walk, at however great a distance, in the footsteps of this wondrous lover of Christ crucified. And the Order founded by St. Francis has been for centuries the great School where the most illustrious Saints have imbibed, or, rather, have

become saturated with, the spirit of the Cross, giving to the world the noblest illustrations that history has recorded of self-surrender for the sake of our Divine Master.

To St. Francis also most emphatically apply the other words of St. Paul : " By whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world ;" a strange expression, no doubt, but meaningful. The same idea is conveyed in other words by the Apostle when he says : " With Christ I am nailed to the Cross" (Gal. ii. 19). As if he had said : " As a branch cut off from one tree and engrafted on another may be said to die to the former and live by the latter, being nourished by its sap, so I die morally to myself ; for I live no longer by the life of the senses or the life of sin, but by the life of Jesus Christ ; and the Cross is to me the Tree of Life, the centre and source of supernatural grace and charity." And, therefore, as the real Resurrection of our Lord from the tomb is the type of our moral resurrection to " newness of life," so the real death of Christ is the type of our death to " this world," which is " an enemy of God " (St. James iv. 4). Hence the Apostle says : " The world is crucified to me." In other words : " It is dead to me. It is to me as a corpse—cold, clammy, putrid, decomposing. There is nothing in it to tempt me, no more than a body from which the soul has fled. Its hand does not touch me, its tongue allure me, its eye seduce me."

" And I am crucified to the world." " Yes ; it hates me, despises me, throws me off. Ay, thank God, I am to it as one dead whom it would bury for ever out of its sight."

And this dying to the world he significantly terms a crucifixion, because it involves the most painful of all sacrifices, and one from which the

bravest of men recoil—the sacrifice of self. It is a crucifixion, because it is the dread sacrifice of Calvary mystically renewed in the lives of the Saints and servants of God, who cut sharp and deep into their hearts the lesson of Christ crucified, present their bodies “a living sacrifice” to God, and daily immolate themselves on the altar of Divine Charity.

And now, if there ever was a man on this earth who could utter those words of the Apostles with all truth, it was St. Francis of Assisi.

As we admire gems not only for their intrinsic beauty but also for their rarity, so we admire remarkable instances of self-sacrifice, however manifested, simply because they form the exceptions to the ordinary course of human life. The most brilliant page in Grecian history is that which records the gallant stand and noble death of the three hundred Spartans, who had perished in the Pass of Thermopylæ, struggling against a host of invaders. The Romans spoke with pride of that valorous old general who, of his own accord, returned to Carthage, there to suffer torture and death, rather than submit to the dishonour of his country. The man who dashes into the waves to rescue a fellow-creature from the merciless ocean is cheered to the echo when he returns with his prize to the shore, for the world admires and rewards a spirit of self-sacrifice, by which alone whatever is greatest and noblest in humanity has been achieved. But this principle, admitted by the world, and, alas! usually carried out only for the world, is the principle that has animated God's Saints at all times, and particularly St. Francis, and has stimulated them to such generosity and such heroism that they might prove themselves to be true and loyal disciples of the Cross. Here was a man—St. Francis—ever ready, yea longing, to accept, for his Master's sake, sacri-

fice in its most trying and most appalling form. So thoroughly was he dead to himself and to the world, that it might be said the flesh had no empire over him, nor the world a hold on him. Nature in him had been taught, in the severe discipline of rigorous austerity, to show herself in all things subservient to grace. Well might he, too, have said: "I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). By fast and prayer and indescribable mortifications he asserted the supremacy of the higher life within him, and kept the senses in slavish obedience, as his soul soared to the heights of Divine contemplation. Here was a man who, by enduring hunger and cold and nakedness and every conceivable privation for his Lord's sake, showed the thoroughness and the reality of his love for Christ crucified; letting all men see that "the kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17)—that the love of our Divine Master can command sacrifices which eclipse the glory of all worldly exploits—that the more a man keeps the forces of nature in check by the help of Divine grace, the higher he rises above the dust and ashes on which he treads, and the shame and corruptions which everywhere encircle him, coming nearer, day by day, to the purity of the Angel, to the love of the Seraph, to the eternal participation of the life of God.

Again, St. Paul says: "Let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in my body." Now this is not the language of the frivolous and foolish egotist, but the manly appeal of the Apostle to his own life against those who impeached his ministry. This brave champion of the Cross had to submit to many heavy trials even from those among whom he laboured. Saint as he was, he had to suffer much from the cutting

remarks and the caustic censures of men. But all these things, however they might afflict him, did not dishearten him. He could confront his enemies and censors, and boldly exclaim : " But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you or by man's day " (1 Cor. iv. 3). His oratory might be criticised, his scholarly ability disputed. It might be said he was wanting in those charms of rhetoric which draw crowds after a gifted and polished speaker. He could meet the charge by glorying in it, saying : " It pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching to save them that believe " (1 Cor. i. 21). But if he did not rest his claims to men's respect on the flimsy basis of human eloquence, he could at last point to his body as a witness of the consecration of himself to the work of his Divine Master. Broken by fatigue, worn with hunger, weakened by captivity, scored by the lash, furrowed by care, tanned by the sun, buffeted by the waves, cut by the winds—did he not bear in his very body the marks of his love for his Lord ; and was he not justified in saying : " I, Paul, am made a minister, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh " ? (Col. i. 23, 24).

But the Apostle's words with more literal truth apply to St. Francis, as they indicate that signal and extraordinary favour conferred upon him by our Blessed Redeemer, which is so conspicuous a proof of our Lord's special love for him.

When Isaias was sent to prophesy to Israel, his tongue was touched and purified by the live coal which the Seraph took with the tongs from the altar. But a Seraph was sent to do greater things for St. Francis, namely, to seal him with the seal of election, and print upon him the Stigmata or wound-marks of Christ crucified. This was a

privilege not accorded to any of the Apostles, not given to St. James, our Lord's kinsman ; nor to St. John, who clung to the very last to the Cross of his Master ; nor even to St. Paul himself. Our Blessed Lord is called the image of His Father's substance and the brightness of His Father's glory (Heb. i. 3.) Now St. Francis was the image of our suffering Redeemer. St. John (1 Epis. iii. 2) says : " We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is ;" or, as St. Paul expresses it (Rom. vi. 5) : " If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection." That is: the elect of God shall share, even in their bodies, at the last day, the glory of Him who is " risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep " (1 Cor. xv. 20). Now the Passion-marks will be the special glory of the Sacred Humanity of our Lord for all eternity. From these luminous scars cones of light will flash for ever, as from five Suns, to brighten with greater lustre the endless day in the land which knows not darkness. Yet it is to a participation in this very glory that St. Francis was admitted, even in this world, being transfigured into the likeness of our crucified Lord. And so, one early morning about the time of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, as he was pouring out his soul in prayer on a slope of Mount Alverno, he felt irradiated with a heavenly light and suffused with a heavenly sweetness—a brightness and an unction such as he had never felt before. Suddenly he became inflamed with a most ardent yearning for God, as if he could live no longer on the earth, but must snap asunder the thread of this mortal flesh, and mount up, unfettered and emancipated, to the vision of the Divine Nature. At the same time he felt a most tender and compassionate love for Jesus cruci-

fied through excessive charity for men, and an indescribable desire to be, as it were, absorbed into His Presence and transformed into His Person. And lo ! as his whole being seemed to melt with the fire of Divine love that was enkindled in his breast, he saw a Seraph with six wings, and apparently crucified, descend from the heights of heaven and approach him with the speed of lightning. The feet and hands of this Seraph were extended and fastened to a cross, and his wings so arranged that two were over his head, two extended as if for flying, and two covered his body. A moment the Saint was stunned and well-nigh stupefied by the vision. Violent emotions of grief and joy alternated in his heart and struggled for the mastery within him. And yet the more he gazed upon the mysterious apparition the more the form before him seemed familiar to his view. He was filled with holy rapture. He felt drawn, as if by a lodestone, to the cross, and as if he too had been nailed to it ; and immediately a sword of compassion transfixed his soul. He then knew, by an interior light, that although suffering was incompatible with seraphic bliss, the vision was vouchsafed him that he might know that he was to be transformed into the likeness of his Lord, not by the martyrdom of the flesh, but by the ardour of the spirit. Behold ! darts of fire came from the Seraph and entered the Saint's hands and feet and side, and St. Francis was indelibly impressed with the Stigmata of Christ crucified ! And so perfect was the impression—as if it had been made on wax and not on a human body—that the very heads of the nails appeared indented in the flesh. And from those wounds, as if raw and open, blood used to flow in streams and soak the garments of the Saint during the two years that intervened between the appearance of the

Seraph to the death of St. Francis. Nearly twelve hundred years had elapsed since our Redeemer had been crucified on Calvary, and yet, of the unnumbered Saints who passed away from earth to heaven during that vast period, St. Francis was the first who was privileged to bear the image of the Crucified. It is this solemn, pathetic, wonderful event in the life of St. Francis which is so skilfully delineated in the painting that surmounts this altar, and which will remind the people of this parish, as long as the canvas lasts, of our Lord's exceptional love for St. Francis of Assisi.

Moreover, every time you behold that sweet countenance lit up with the beauty of holiness, and see those outstretched arms and those bare feet, and look at that humble garb, you will remember that you too are children of the Cross, redeemed by it, sanctified by it, destined to be gathered around it with the elect at the Last Day. As you kneel before this altar you will also learn to glory in the Cross ; not to be ashamed of the Faith it symbolises ; yea, rather to rejoice and revel in the thought that this holy Faith is your priceless inheritance, more valuable than the wealth and kingdoms of the world. Let this, then, be the subject of your glory—not that you belong to one kingdom or another, not that one has been more successful in life than another, or can boast of a nobler pedigree or a more honourable name ; but that you are members of that Church around whose Head the Saints of God shine as a diadem of stars—of that Church which alone is Holy, as she alone is One, Catholic, and Apostolic—of that Church whose glorious son St. Francis has been honoured and revered for six-and-twenty generations as the most lustrous example of love for Christ crucified. You will also remember that you too must be crucified to the

world, however hard may be the saying, however bitter may be the truth. The world hates the Cross and sets aside the Gospel. It hated our Lord and Master ; it hates His Church, and strives to stamp her out and annihilate her existence ; for she is the ever-living witness on the side of God against its principles and its practice. It calls the Saints fools, or zealots, or sentimentalists. Thus it spoke of St. Paul ; thus it has spoken of St. Francis. But, ah ! we must not forget that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. iii. 19). You must die to the world, for its life is your death. You must die to it, for all it has to give you is mortal, and therefore cannot satisfy the cravings of an immortal soul. You want life, the life of grace, and this is to be found only at the foot of the Crucifix. You want life, the life of glory, and this is to be found only in the bosom of God.

And you, too, must bear on your bodies "the marks of the Lord Jesus." You bore His mark when you were baptized in His name, and marked with the Cross at "the Laver of Regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5). And that holy sign was—if I might say so—cut deeper into your souls when your foreheads were anointed with the sacred Chrism in the Sacrament of Confirmation. And as our churches are marked with the Cross, to show they are dedicated to the worship of Christ crucified, so are your bodies marked with it ; for they, too, are the temples of the Living God. Beware lest you violate the sanctity of those souls ; beware lest you profane the sanctity of those temples. Reverence the mark of the service of Jesus here, that you may be worthy to bear the mark of His elect at the latter day.

These are the lessons you will learn in this church. These are the truths that will be preached

from this sanctuary by the devoted sons of St. Francis of Assisi. The spirit, as well as the mantle, of their Father is upon them. May the blessing of their august Founder also descend upon their work ! Let them not labour among you in vain. Be faithful to them, as the guides of your souls. Love them, as representing those virtues that are dearest to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Give them that consolation which cheers a priest on in the exercise of his sacred ministry, and helps him to "bear all things" —difficulties, however great, labour, however hard —namely, the consolation of seeing you good and edifying Catholics ; showing, not by protests and promises, but by the sanctity of your lives, and above all, by attending regularly to the duties of your Holy Faith, that you "glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And may you, and the good fathers who labour among you with such zeal and self-denial, be found near your illustrious Patron, St. Francis, on that great day when the Son of Man shall come to sift the tribes of the earth, and gather His elect to rest for ever under the shadow of His Cross !



